

The God Who Is My Refuge And Strength  
Psalm 46

Intro. 1) It was this psalm that inspired the writing of Luther's best known hymn: "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

2) • Psalms 46-48 is a trilogy of praise psalms.

- A song of Zion (cf. 48; 76; 84; 87; 122) it celebrates the presence of God among His People and the protector He is for His people.
- In content it is both a psalm of confidence, but also one of eschatological expectation when "[God] will be exalted among the nations and in the earth" (v. 10).

I. God's protection is readily available. 46:1-3

Some have proposed that the historical context of Psalms 46-48 is God's supernatural deliverance of the city of Jerusalem from the Assyria armies of King Sennacherib during the reign of good King Hezekiah in c. 701 B.C. (cf.. 2 Kings 19:35-36).

1) Trouble will not cause me to fear 46:1-2

- Note the verb tense: God is (present tense). Literally the Hebrew reads "Elohim to us a refuge and strength a help in troubles is found very much."
- What is He? 3 things are noted:
  1. refuge – protection, a place of shelter and safety
  2. strength – power, an avenue of might and means
  3. a very present help (an abundantly available help) – a constant companion and comforter "very much" when I need Him.

2) Nature will not cause me to fear 46:2-3

- "Therefore we will not fear" is a "hinge" phrase that connects the flow of thought from vs. 1 to vs. 2-3.

The psalmist's introduces cosmic and nature language to further confirm the all encompassing promise of God's protection.

II. God's power is majestically offered 46:4-7

There is a dramatic change in tone and atmosphere beginning with vs. 4. From earthquakes and raging waters we suddenly are brought into the presence of a marvelous river and a holy city. These verses find a wonderful fulfillment in the Revelation of John as he describes the "River of Life" in the New Jerusalem of heaven in Revelation 22:1-5.

1) God has a city of joy 46:4-5

- A river flowing whose source is God looks back to the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:10-14 and reminds us of what we lost in the fall. It also takes us forward in anticipation of what we shall regain through Christ who is Himself the "living water" (John 7:38).
  - This city has a uniquely moral character for it is "the holy place where *Elyon*, the Most High dwells" (*NIV*).
- 1) God is in the midst of her → His presence
  - 2) She shall not be moved (*HCSB*, "toppled, cf vs. 2,6) → His power
  - 3) God shall help her at the break of dawn → His promise
- Mountains may topple (v.2) and kingdom will topple (v.6), but the city of God will not topple, for "God is within her" (*HCSB*).

2) The nations have a destiny of judgment 46:6-7

- Again we are presented with a strong contrast as well as reminisces of Psalm 2 and how the nations react to the sovereign Lord and His Messiah.
- Controlled and enamored by gods who are no gods at all, 1) the nations rage (*NIV*, "are in an uproar"), 2) the kingdoms were moved (*ESV*, "the kingdoms totter"), 3) He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

- Our God simply speaks with what Revelation 19:15 calls a “sharp sword” and with only a word “He strikes the nations.”
- *Jehovah Sabaoth* simply speaks and it all melts like snow under a blazing sun and comes to nothing. “God of Jacob our refuge,” He is the personal promise/covenant keeping God of His people.
- ❖ It is one thing to know Him as Sovereign Creator. It is another thing to know Him as personal Savior.

### III. God’s peace is sovereignly accomplished 46:8-9

God’s people are challenged, charged if you like, to come and see the works of Jehovah.

#### 1) He will make desolate the places of war 46:8

Desolation means to devastate in such a way as to astonish the onlooker. Who would believe that the great empires of the world would come and go and eventually disappear all together?

#### 2) He will destroy the instruments of war 46:9

In every believer’s heart there is a longing for the coming again of Isaiah’s “Prince of Peace” (Is. 9:6). When the Lord Jesus returns in glorious might and majesty as depicted in Rev. 19:11-16, He will bring an end to all battles and all wars once and for all.

- James Montgomery Boice captures well the thrust of vs. 8-9:

“[The text]” is not presenting God as a peace negotiator but as a conqueror. In other words, this peace is not to be compared to the SALT treaties, negotiated disarmament pacts between mutually power nations.” (vol. 2, 392).

### IV. God’s praise will be universally announced 46:10-11

What is our proper response to this Lord of host (of all armies) and God of Jacob who is our refuge?

#### 1) Know who He is 46:10-11

The peoples of the earth are issued a command: “Be still”, “cease striving” (NASV), “Stop your fighting” (HCSB) “and know I am God.” Though this verse is often cited in the context of the personal devotional life, its true context is public, cosmic and universal.

2) Know what He will receive 46:10

- The psalm concludes with a promise of eschatological missionary success. It anticipates the innumerable crowd of Rev. 7:9-17.
- Psalm 46 looks to the future and the destiny of God’s knowledge and glory spread throughout the nations.

Conclusion

It inspired Martin Luther, giving him strength and keeping him strong against great odds, tremendous opposition, and constant endangerment. May the words of Psalm 46, echoed in “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” be a source of strength and encouragement for us this day as well.