

“A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD!

How then Can I Be Afraid?”

Psalm 46

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INTRODUCTION

Jerusalem: city chosen by God as David’s capital city

- Place of House of God—tabernacle then temple
- High fortified walls, powerful gates
- Good water supply from Gihon spring to Pool of Siloam
- Yet, these fortifications proved insufficient during Hezekiah’s reign when Assyria attacked and ruined the northern kingdom of Israel, and then later systematically ruined all Judah but Jerusalem.
- Recount the story of II K. 18-19. Rabshakeh representing army of Sennacherib; everyone was afraid—even Hezekiah.
- But God sent a message to the king from Isaiah the prophet: **Fear not** (II K. 19:6)

Have you ever been gripped by fear?

What do you do when gripped by fear? Psalm 46 can help us. It shows us that **God is for us (v. 1, v. 7, v. 11).**

A psalm of hope and confidence.

Three stanzas, each ending with “Selah” and the last two with the refrain—7, 11.

Stanza 1 tells us What; Stanza 2 tells us Why; Stanza 3 tells us How.

Conclusion of story of army of Assyria—II K. 19. Don’t think your God can help you—mocked God & Judah! 19:10-13—and he was right about the fate of all these other nations! Hezekiah prayed! (19:16-19). God’s answer in v. 28. God’s action—v. 35-37! **This incident is likely the background of Psalm 46!**

- I. STANZA 1: vv. 1-3—WHAT? [*God is our Refuge—our source of hope in times of trouble.*]
*See v.1 first three words: **God is for us!** With the emphasis on **GOD**.*
What is the worst thing that can happen to this world
 - A. The Pillars of the Universe Crumble and Fall (vv. 2-3)
 - Earth changes
 - Mountains are moved—slip into the “heart of the seas.”
 - Waters roar and foam in violent upheaval.
 - Rise up so high that the mountains quake at “swelling pride” of the water.
 - B. God Can Sustain us in All this!
 1. Our refuge [**much better than the twin towers of NYC in 2001.**
 2. Our strength [we can endure and handle whatever comes upon us.]
 3. Our help—“very present”, or literally “that can be found very much.”Action step: Run to Him in prayer the moment you begin to fear.
- II. STANZA II: vv. 4-7—WHY? [*God’s Presence is our sure reason for hope.*]
 - A. The Divine Presence is in the midst—cf. Isaiah’s words about “Immanuel”—Is. 7:14; 8:8, 10—spoken to Ahaz, father of Hezekiah!
 1. The Holy Place—**holy** because God lives there! (v. 4)

2. Dwelling places of Most High God (v. 4)
 3. God in the midst, gives *help when the morning dawns—after the long night of trouble!* (v. 5)
 4. Lord of Hosts—army of heaven, army of Israel, stars of the heavens **is with us** (v. 7)
 5. God of Jacob—our **stronghold**—MIGHTY FORTRESS, impregnable
- B. The River of Divine Delights: cf. Ezek. 37; Zech. 14; Rev. 22—flowing out from His throne!
[Isaiah 8:6-8—In Ahaz’s day rejecting quiet stream of Siloam for trust in mighty rivers of heathen powers—therefore God brings on the mighty floods of the Euphrates which will overflow and ruin the land (Assyria). [Takes us back to the threat of mighty seas of vv. 1-3—cataclysmic upheaval.
But the believer has the cool, calm, refreshing, delightful presence of the Lord and all his provisions.
Jesus in John—out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.
- C. The Ruin of the Most Powerful Adversaries (v. 6)
1. Seeds of self-destruction
 - Uproar—cf. v. 3, roaring of waters; full of agitation and effort against God
 - Totter—They are “moved.”
 2. Sound of the divine voice—cf. at Creation
 - He merely speaks
 - The earth and all its opposition merely **melts away**.
- D. The Preservation of His People—**SHE WILL NOT BE MOVED**—v. 5
- Contrast the Earth in v. 2—mountains slip (shake, are moved)
 - Contrast the kingdoms that totter—move, v. 6.
- Action step: stop and reflect on God’s past deliverances and answers to prayer in Scripture and your life.

- III. STANZA III: VV. 8-11—HOW [We can Experience God’s presence even in our most troubled times!]
- A. Come, See what God has Done—esp. with the eye of faith like the prophets [His works, like those of Creation, Flood, Exodus, Conquest, Kingdom, etc. (vv. 8-9)]
1. He works desolations in the Earth—esp. the most recent one with Assyria!
 2. He makes Wars to cease—esp. those against His People (9)
 He breaks bows, cuts apart spears, burns chariots/wagons—all implements of war and opposition to Him and to His people.
- B. **BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD** [*Let go, relax, stop striving!*]
1. Stop your vain opposition, living your way, your plans, rebellion against Him! [esp. wicked nations]
 2. Learn to trust Him completely—let go, stop striving in your own efforts!
 3. God is For us—v. 11; He is our Stronghold.
- C. God will be Exalted (v. 10)—**double emphasis!** [In the nations, and on the Earth—cf. Phil. 2:9-11]
Action step: Memorize Psalm 46:1-3 and quote it every time fear grips your heart.

CONCLUSION

How did Luther face up to his fear and the mighty powers against him?

He wrote the words to “A Mighty Fortress is Our God—based on vv. 1-3 of Psalm 46; read esp. stanza 4.

The Lord of Hosts is with us! He commands all the armies of Heaven and Earth.

The God of Jacob—covenant God of His people—our refuge, strength, help, stronghold.

God is **for us**—vv. 1, 7, 11. WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?