

SBC – Oct. 6, 2024

Psalm 46 (NKJV)

“God our Refuge & Strength”

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To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. A Song For Alamoth.

The sons of Korah were Levites. They came to have a key place in the musical aspect of temple worship (cf. 2 Chron. 20:19). Perhaps it was written by them or for them to lead the congregation in worship.

Alamoth literally means “maidens,” perhaps referring to high-pitched instruments used to accompany it, or perhaps referring to the type of melody of the song (cf. 1 Chron. 15:20). Then again, some think it is intended for soprano voices to sing it. But it is not certain.

Some think the background may have been the threatening invasion by Assyria led by the command of Sennacherib, as seen in 2 Kings 18 and 19 (cf. Isa. 36-37).

Many think that Psalms 46-48 form a sort of trilogy emphasizing the ultimate triumph of God.

Slide # 1

Psalm 46 – God our Refuge and Strength

Psalm 47 – God the Sovereign

Psalm 48 – The Beauty of Zion

Psalm 46 has been a comfort for God’s people through the ages. It inspired Martin Luther to write the hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”.

Slide # 2

Psalm 46

“God our Refuge & Strength”

Ps. 46:1-3 Come What May God is our Refuge

Ps. 46:4-7 God’s Peaceful Provision

Ps. 46:8-11 The LORD exalted among the Nations

1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Many of the Psalms begin with the Psalmist in crisis mode, but Psalm 46 starts with God's provision.

A place of refuge is a place of shelter. It is where you go for safety in a time of crisis. It is the idea of a place of impenetrable defense.

Slide # 3

Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV)

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

And God is our strength.

Slide # 4

Psalm 138:3 (NKJV)

3 In the day when I cried out, You answered me, And **made me bold with strength in my soul.**

God is the source of our strength. He is the Almighty Who can help us!

Furthermore, God is a "very present help in trouble." Very present means He is NEAR instead of being far off and aloof. He is with us as the writer will go on to emphasize.

"Trouble" is the idea of a tight place where the pressure is really on! It is a desperate situation.

God, is this present HELP! He is there when we need Him! He is always available! God never takes a day off!

How wonderful to know God as your refuge, strength and help.

I still remember my mother quoting this verse in hard times! Even as an unbeliever, it resonated with me.

The Psalmist now applies what is called "the logic of faith".

2 Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

If God is our refuge, strength, and present help then we need not fear no matter what happens. What is described here is incredible upheaval. The mountains were thought to represent that which is most stable. But even if that which is most stable becomes unstable we still don't have to be afraid because Who God is to us.

Imagine the worst-case scenario in this life. Have you seen the pictures of the destruction in North Carolina and the effects caused by Hurricane "Helene"? It is almost indescribable.

Slide # 5



Slide # 6



Now magnify that to entire mountain ranges being carried into the sea. Imagine the sea waters roaring with unbelievable fierceness and the mountains quaking uncontrollably.

The idea is that come what may, we don't have to be afraid because God, our refuge and strength, is with us. No matter the size of the crisis – God is BIGGER! No matter how bad things get God is a very present help to His people.

And this reality calls for us to pause and reflect on our great God and His care of us. We are safe with Him – eternally safe.

Selah denotes a pause or pause for reflection!

One day the mountains are going to shake when God arises to shake the earth mightily.

Slide # 7

Revelation 6:14–17 (NKJV)

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Where will the safe place be in that day? Where it has always been – only in the LORD!

It seems that this Psalm envisions the worst of times coming as prophesied in the OT regarding the coming Day of the Lord's judgment.

Slide # 8

Isaiah 24:19–20 (NKJV)

19 The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

This is sinners in the hands of an angry God! We know what is coming, but God's people don't have to fear! The world should be shaking in their boots, but alas, they are in blindness and have no fear of God. This terrible day will come on them as thief in the night and 1 Thess. 5:3 says, “and they will not escape.”

But God's people have no need to fear the unthinkable upheaval that is coming because our God is with us! He is our safe place! In Christ, absolutely NOTHING can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

But now the scene jumps ahead to when God will have put down all the chaos and the kingdom has come. That is what is pictured in verses 4-7. It will be a wonderful time of gladness and peace for God's people.

4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

At the second coming there is going to be a reconfiguration of Jerusalem and the makeover is going to be glorious. Right now there is no river running through Jerusalem. But that is all going to change at the Second Coming.

Slide # 9

Zechariah 14:8-9 (NKJV)

8 And in that day it shall be— That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur.

9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be "The LORD is one," And His name one.

At that time God is going to cause a new river to burst forth from the Temple in Jerusalem. These will be living waters that flow all year long, in both summer and winter. They will be living in contrast to be stagnant. They are living waters because they will bring life giving productivity to the entire Judean desert. Half of this river will flow toward the eastern sea, which is the Dead Sea, and the other half shall flow toward the western sea, which is the Mediterranean Sea.

Ezek. 47:1-12 enlarges upon this new river telling us it will flow from the Temple. Evidently it will be a massive subterranean river flowing up from the Temple and out to these two seas. In the process it will irrigate all the surrounding land causing the dessert to blossom like a rose as prophesied by Isaiah in Isa. 35:1-6.

Slide # 10

Ezekiel 47:1 (NKJV)

1 Then he brought me back to the door of the **temple**; and there was **water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple** toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar.

Slide # 11



This river will serve as a source of blessing to the city. It represents God's provision of refreshment and causes gladness.

These words about refreshing waters contrast with those about the threatening torrents of verse 3. – **John Macarthur**

The waters of verse 3 are waters of judgment, but the river and its streams of verse 4 are waters of blessing.

The image is significant because Jerusalem does not in fact have such a river, only a few small streams. Yet the prophets anticipated the day when a mighty river would flow from the temple itself ([Ezekiel 47:12](#), [Revelation 22:1](#)). The future reality is already in the mind of the psalmist. – **David Guzik**

Note Jerusalem here is called "the city of God". Jesus is God – He is Messiah God and this will be the place where He set up His kingdom headquarters (cf. Ps. 48:1-2).

5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

The KEY to Jerusalem's security is the presence of God in her midst. Again, when Messiah-God comes He will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem and His presence is what make her unshakable – unmovable.

Slide # 12

Joel 3:17 (NKJV)

17 “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”

Slide # 13**Zechariah 2:4–5 (NKJV)**

4 who said to him, “Run, speak to this young man, saying: ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it.

5 For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’ ”

Zechariah 2:10 (NKJV)

10 “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD.

The blessings of security will fully come to the city of God (Jerusalem) when God the Messiah is living right there in her midst. It is His presence that is the basis of this security.

And then this footnote: “***God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.***”

This will be the dawning of a new day – the kingdom age!

It has been a long dark night for God’s people, but soon the morning will dawn and Christ will take His rightful place, showing Himself strong on behalf of His own. – ***William MacDonald***

And here is how it will go down...

6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

This is reflective of Psalm 2 where the nations rage and set themselves against the LORD and His Anointed. In the end the entire world will be aligned against Jerusalem, and then God is going to shake up the kingdoms of this world and reduce them to nothing.

Slide # 14

Zechariah 14:2–3 (NKJV)

2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.

Slide # 15**Revelation 11:15 (NKJV)**

15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

God merely speaks the Word and it is over. “He uttered His voice, the earth melted.”

Slide # 16**Nahum 1:5 (NKJV)**

5 The mountains quake before Him, The hills melt, And the earth heaves at His presence, Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

LORD here is literally “YHWH”– the eternal unchanging covenant God of Israel. “Hosts” is “Sabaoth”. So literally it is “YHWH of Sabaoth is with us.”

The word “*Sabaoth*” is a transliteration of a Hebrew word that literally means “hosts” or “armies”. It is often translated as “LORD of hosts” (cf. Rom. 9:29; Isa. 1:9).

It is a majestic title for God in the OT emphasizing His power – that He is the power behind all powers. Sometimes “hosts” is used in reference the angelic armies of heaven (cf. 1 Kings 22:19) and sometimes in reference to human armies (cf. Num. 1:3; 1 Sam. 17:45). But in all cases God is shown to be LORD over and controlling all these military hosts who carry out His will.

Really, it is a “military title” for God emphasizing He is the LORD over all the armies of heaven and over all the powers that be. It is therefore variously translated as “*LORD of powers*”, “*LORD of Omnipotence*”, or “*LORD Almighty*”. The sense is “Lord over all” or “Lord of the universe”. The emphasis is on His sovereign authority and power.

How wonderful that the Almighty Who is LORD over all power and powers is with us.

The title "God of Jacob" identifies God as the God of the people who descended through Jacob, who became known as the Jews (Genesis 32:28). Jacob was a character (a trickster) but in spite of his character God keeps His promises made to Jacob and his descendants (Genesis 35:10–12). Being the God of Jacob highlights God’s covenant faithfulness! This God Who is ever faithful to His covenant promises is our refuge. You can count on Him.

Selah!

Slide # 17

Malachi 3:6 (NKJV)

6 “For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, **O sons of Jacob.**

Verses 1-3 emphasis God’s people have nothing to fear even though catastrophic things will come to the world. Verses 4-7 look beyond the time of catastrophe to the kingdom age to follow. And now verses 8-11 are prophetic in nature – emphasizing what God is going to do to bring in a the time of lasting peace.

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth.

Look what God is going to do to humble the world to bring about the glorious kingdom age previously described. He is going to make “desolations in the earth.” Desolations are the idea of devastation.

Have you read the Book of Revelation? Have you read Isaiah 2 or Isaiah 24? These and many other passages show that on the Day of the Lord Judgment, God is going to wreak havoc on the earth and humble the entire world under the Lord Jesus Christ. The world is going DOWN!

Slide # 18**Isaiah 13:6–9 (NKJV)**

6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as **destruction** from the Almighty.

7 Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart **will melt**,

8 And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.

9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, **To lay the land desolate**; And He will destroy its sinners from it.

Behold the works of the LORD Who makes desolations in the earth! The Best of Times is coming for the world, but first the worst of times – times of great desolation under the judging hand of God.

Desolations are necessary but they work to a good end...

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

When Jesus the Prince of Peace comes there will be no more war because He makes wars to cease – He brings about the destruction of all warfare materials.

Slide # 19**Isaiah 2:4 (NKJV)**

4 He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall **beat their swords into plowshares**, And their **spears into pruning hooks**; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **Neither shall they learn war anymore.**

10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Here is the conclusion of the matter! We have here a direct Word from God Himself. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God". I think there is a message for everyone here.

"Be still" is literally "Take your hands off!" Relax! God's got this!

We like to be “hands-on” people and manage our own lives, but God is God, and we are but His servants. – **Warren Wiersbe**

We read about the terrible things facing the world, we see the horrendous things going on in our world, and we are tempted to try and take matters into our own hands. God says, “Be still”. Be still and recognize that God is God and He is sovereign over all things.

He says, “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” The end of the matter is that the world in all of its fitful raging is going down and God is going UP – He alone will be exalted in that day.

Slide # 20

Isaiah 2:11 (NKJV)

11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And **the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.**

Isaiah 2:17 (NKJV)

17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; **The LORD alone will be exalted in that day,**

There is also a message here for the world in all of its rebellion. Stop striving with God. “Be still!” Take your self-willed hands off the wheel and let God be God! It is the idea of surrendering to God!

In this verse there is a change of person, and [YHWH] himself is introduced, as commanding the world to cease its opposition, to own his power, and to acknowledge his sovereignty over all the kingdoms of the nations.” - **George Horne**

Slide # 21

Habakkuk 2:20 (NKJV)

20 “But the LORD is in His holy temple. **Let all the earth keep silence before Him.**”

Zechariah 2:13 (NKJV)

13 **Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD,** for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”

And then the Psalm ends with this refrain of comfort...

11 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

This the very same thing stated in verse 7. There are three “Selahs” in the Psalm denoting three sections. And note that in each case we as God’s people are called to pause and reflect on the reality that God is with us.

Slide # 22

Psalm 46

vv. 1-3 God is our refuge, strength, and help - SELAH

vv. 4-7 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. - SELAH

vv. 8-11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. - SELAH

“On the day he died, John Wesley had already nearly lost his voice and could only be understood with difficulty. But at the last with all his strength he could summon, Wesley suddenly called out, ‘***The best of all is, God is with us.***’ Then, raising his hand slightly and waving it in triumph, he exclaimed again with thrilling effect, ‘***The best of all is, God is with us.***’” – ***James Montgomery Boice***

Indeed,

Psalm 46:11 (NKJV)

11 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah