

Israel's Hymnal  
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### PSALM FORTY-SIX

[Pss 46:1] God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

[Pss 46:2] Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change, And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;

[Pss 46:3] Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof. Selah

[Pss 46:4] There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

[Pss 46:5] God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God will help her, and that right early.

[Pss 46:6] The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, the earth melted.

[Pss 46:7] Jehovah of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

[Pss 46:8] Come, behold the works of Jehovah, What desolations he hath made in the earth.

[Pss 46:9] He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariots in the fire.

[Pss 46:10] Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

[Pss 46:11] Jehovah of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

### GOD THE REFUGE OF HIS PEOPLE

I. The earth in the throes of the convulsions of nature (vss. 1-3).

II. A glimpse of the millennial Jerusalem (vss. 4-6).

III. A warless world (vss. 8-11).

In Psalm 46 we see the Tribulation, and emerging from it the great millennial Jerusalem of the Kingdom Age and a warless world.

#### I. The earth is in the throes of the convulsions of nature

Some have interpreted verse 1-3 of this psalm as a hypothetical case. Viewed from this point, the author is made to say that should the worse come to the worst--the passing away of the mountains, etc.--Israel will not fear, because she has put her trust in God. This interpretation is a possible one, but it is hardly likely. It is evident to everyone who is familiar with the prophetic word that the psalmist in these verses is speaking of the Tribulation. When we examine predictions regarding it, we see that the mountains will actually be shaken into the heart of the seas and that the waters will also literally roar and be troubled. For instance, in our Lord's Olivet Discourse, as recorded in Luke 21:25,26, we see a prediction that the nations of the earth at the time of the Tribulation will be perplexed and will faint for fear because of the

roaring of the seas and the billows. There is nothing in this context to indicate a departure from the normal sense of these words. Hence they should be understood literally to refer to gigantic tide waves that will sweep far inland from the ocean, on the various coasts. The destruction will be frightful. The people will be at their wits' end, and many of them will faint for fear in regard to what might come upon the earth. An examination also of Revelation 6:12-17 shows that there will be convulsions throughout all nature, and that many of the isles of the seas will disappear, whereas the mountains will be thrown down into their valleys and canyons. This passage also is to be taken literally, since there is nothing in the context to indicate a departure from the literal meaning.

By prophetic vision the psalmist was carried forward to the time of the Tribulation and observed these great convulsions of nature. As he watched these physical upheavals, he voiced the sentiment of the faithful remnant of Israel that will turn from ungodliness to the Lord. They will take their stand upon the promises of God and will face these mighty upheavals and changes with perfect confidence. In regard to them they will have no fears. In other words, they will have the faith expressed in Psalm 23 by David. Since they will have accepted the Lord as their Shepherd, they will be convinced that He will not allow anything to come into their lives but that which will be designed for their good.

While Psalm 46 specifically refers to the faithful remnant of the Tribulation, the general principle that God will take care of His people in the midst of trouble and disaster is taught in other scriptures. God is interested in all of His people and will not allow anything to come into the life of the least of His followers, except that which is designed for their good. The individual believer, however, finds greater comfort for himself in such passages as Psalm 23 rather than Psalm 46, which is spoken specifically of the remnant of Israel of the end time.

## II. Glimpse of the millennial Jerusalem.

According to verse 4 of this passage there will be a river which will make glad the city of God, where the tabernacles of the Most High will be. This city of God is none other than Jerusalem in Palestine, as one sees from Psalm 87:1-3.

An examination of Ezekiel, chapters 40-48 (especially chapters 47 and 48), shows that there will be a very high mountain in Palestine, on the south end of which will be located the city of Jerusalem. There will flow forth from it a stream, as we see in chapter 47. Reference is made to this river in Zechariah, chapter 14. The streams of this river will make the inhabitants of the city of God glad.

The psalmist sees God, in the person of the Messiah, in the midst of Israel. He will be there as her Judge, Lawgiver, and King (Isa. 33:22). When He has thus returned and taken up His abode in Jerusalem, it will nevermore be moved. It has undergone many terrific sieges in the past and is destined to pass through the worst one yet in the future. However, when the time here foreseen arrives, all of its troubles will be over.

But in the latter half of verse 5 we read this statement: "God will help her, and that right early." Thus in this statement the prophet comes back from his advanced position of viewing Jerusalem as the capital of the millennial earth, returning to his own day. At the same time he looks out into the future and sees the holy city gripped in the throes of the Tribulation Period. He hastens to assure us that notwithstanding the severity of the times, Israel will be helped by her God and that right early.

The marginal note of this statement is, "at the dawn of the morning." This rendering is the literal version of the Hebrew and is to be preferred to the translation found in the text. What is meant by "at the dawn of morning"? The period during which God has been absent from the world is represented as night. The time when He returns with healing in His wings (literally *rays or beams*) is thought of as the dawning of the day of Messiah's glorious reign. An examination of Zechariah, chapter 14, shows that, at the very critical moment when Israel will be on the verge of collapse, Messiah will appear and deliver her. Thus He will give needed help at the dawning of the day.

In verse 6 the prophet--in the tersest and most rugged verse of the Scriptures--described the fruitless efforts that the God-defying nations of the world will make in their final fury against God. When we read this verse in light of such passages as Psalm 2:1-3 and Revelation 19:19,20, we can understand what the psalmist was describing. The time will come when the nations of the earth will rage against God Almighty, attempt to throw off all restraint, and defy even the Almighty Himself. Finally, the Son's anger will be kindled, He will utter His voice, and will descend to earth to deal with the nations and to set up His kingdom of righteousness (Ps. 2:6-12).

Again in Psalm 46:7, the prophet describes Jehovah of hosts, the Hebrew Messiah--the Lord Jesus Christ--in His peaceful reign in the city of Jerusalem and of His being a refuge to all who put their trust in Him.

### III. A warless world.

We hear much over the radio and read many articles from statesmen as well as from religious journalists concerning the establishment of a just and permanent peace upon earth. Moreover, all of us are acquainted with the "Four Freedoms" which were promised to the world by the late President Roosevelt and former Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Every reasonable, thinking person appreciates all the thoughts and efforts of men to eliminate war from the earth and to establish a period of permanent peace and righteousness. When, however, one studies the Bible carefully, one comes to the conclusion that no man nor any set of men can accomplish that permanent peace. The causes of war are still here--the unregenerated heart of men and the existence and presence of the devil, together with all his wicked host. These are the causes of war. There can never be any period of permanent peace and the establishment of a reign of righteousness until after Satan is removed from the scene of action and all men are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The conclusions just reached in the preceding paragraph are confirmed by a study of verse 8 and 9 of Psalm 46.

As we have seen, according to verse 6 Jehovah of hosts, the Messiah, utters His voice and takes over the world situation. When He does this, there will be great desolation throughout the entire world. The psalmist in vision sees these things, as we learned from verse 8. Thus in observing these things, he speaks to those who survive the ordeal of the great Tribulation saying, "Come, behold the works of Jehovah, What desolations he hath made in the earth." All the civilizations that man in his wicked estate has built upon the earth shall be completely wrecked and ruined in the Tribulation and at the second coming of our Lord.

In the next sentence, verse 9, we are told that it is Jehovah, the Lord Jesus, who makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth. He does so, not by the preaching of the gospel, but by His visible, bodily return to this earth. When He does come back, He will destroy the weapons of war, as we see in the second

statement of verse 9: "He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariots in the fire." These predictions are in perfect harmony with Isaiah 9:5, which foretells that the Messiah destroys the weapons of warfare.

When He returns, there will be no more equipping of armies, navies, or air forces. Men will not lift up sword against nations, neither shall they learn war any more. May that time speedily come!

In view of the fact that God is supreme and will come to this earth and take over the management of all things, the psalmist, speaking in all seriousness to the world, said,

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (vs. 10).

The world has lost its sense of the existence and of the presence of God Almighty. The god of this world has blinded the eyes of mankind so that they cannot see and recognize the fact that there is a God who is overruling in the affairs of men. It is therefore imperative that men should be still and consider the evidence, which is most abundant, concerning the existence and the omnipotence of God.

Moreover, God announces to the world that He will be exalted among the nations, will be exalted in the earth. He is exalted throughout the universe as He sits enthroned in glory in the heavens of the heaven. But the time will come when He will be exalted among the nations here upon the earth and will reign in the city of Jerusalem. On this point see Psalm 132.

Psalm 46 concludes with a vision of the Messiah's having come to earth and having set up His reign: "Jehovah of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge" (vs. 11).