

Psalm 46

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah.
According to alamothe. A song.

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth
give way and the mountains fall into the heart
of the sea,
- ³ though its waters roar and foam and the
mountains quake with their surging. *Selah*
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the
city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
- ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*
- ⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- ⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields[Ⓜ] with fire.
- ¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
- ¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

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The name of
the LORD is a
fortified tower;
the righteous
run to it and
are safe
(Proverbs 18:10).



God is our Refuge

Psalm 46:1-3



Part One

- When the pressure is on
- intro. to the Psalm (v.0) ¹

World in **Chaos** (vv. 2b-3)

- Earth, mountains, sea
- Present crisis ²
- Future crisis ³

Confidence in God (v. 1)

- Our refuge ⁴
- Our strength ⁵
- Our help

People of **Calm** (v. 2a)

- Present calm ⁶
- Future calm ⁷

¹ Two useful books on the Psalms: Tim Keller, *My Rock; My Refuge: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms*; and Alec Motyer, *Psalms by the Day: A New Devotional Translation*.

² **2 Kings 18-19**

³ **Isaiah 24:19-21; Nahum 1:5-6; Hebrews 12:26; Revelation 6:12, 14**

⁴ **1 Samuel 22, 24; Psalm 142:4-5; 61:2-3; 71:3; Isaiah 28:17; Nahum 1:7; Psalm 2:12**

⁵ **Psalm 68:35; 2 Corinthians 4:12; 12:9-10**

⁶ **Isaiah 26:3-4**

⁷ **Romans 8:1**



After translating and teaching through the Psalms, Psalm 46 became one of Martin Luther's favourites. Borrowing from its phrases, he was inspired to write his great Reformation Hymn, "**A Mighty Fortress is Our God.**" Many times, during this dark and tumultuous period, when terribly discouraged, he would turn to his friend, Philip Melancthon, and say, 'Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm.'

1. A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.
2. Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.
3. And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.
4. That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

A Glossary for Martin Luther's "Battle Hymn of the Reformation": A Mighty Fortress is Our God

V.1 "A Mighty Fortress" was written in the days of castles when these fortresses were not tourist attractions but the ultimate in military defence. "**A bulwark never failing**" refers to a fortification's protective wall that can never be breached or broken into. Such is our God!

"The flood of mortal ills prevailing" are the hard times and difficulties we face in this fallen world. "**Our ancient foe**" is Satan, the devil, who's trying hard to "**work us woe,**" which is danger, distress, or worse. "**On earth is not his equal**" because no mere human could stand against Satan and his diabolical skill and power: "**his craft and power are great.**"

V.2 "our striving" refers to any efforts we make to stand against the devil. "**The man of God's own choosing**" is God's appointed Man, the perfect man, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. "**Lord Sabaoth**" means "Lord of hosts" (for "hosts" don't think hospitality, think armies - armies of angels, angelic warriors of heaven). "**He must win**" because it's a forgone conclusion (Christ's D-Day death is done) that Jesus will win the battle (Christ's V-Day return is unstoppable). Praise the Lord.

V.3 "this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us" - devils, that is, demons seek to disintegrate or destroy us. "**The prince of darkness grim**" is another title for Satan, the arch-demon who is fierce and sinister. But "**His rage we can endure.**" We can persevere because Satan's fury against us is short-term before he meets his destiny in the lake of fire. "**One little word shall fell him**" To what was Luther referring? A word from God like "Liar!" (John 8:44) or "Enough!" or "Jesus!" (Mark 9:38) or "Hell (for you!)" (Revelation 20:7-10). Or was Luther referring to the word of God as a whole (namely, the Bible)? The beginning of v.4 might tip us in this direction, although Lutheran scholars point to Luther's own explanation in his pamphlet *Against Hanswurst* (1541): the "little word" is "Devil, you lie!" or "Liar!"

V.4 "above all earthly powers" refers to human powers standing in opposition to God. They with Satan will also be felled by God's word. And this utter defeat is certain because "**God's truth abideth still.**" It remains to this day powerfully supreme and will never fail in keeping with God's eternal reign: for "**His kingdom is forever.**" Amen. God is our confidence!