



## Psalm 46 – A Psalm of Trust in God’s Mighty Power

### Background to the Psalm and a meander through a couple of byways (Korah and Jehosophat)

Psalm 46 is credited as a psalm ‘of the sons of Korah’ – there are other Psalms attributed to the ‘sons of Korah’, for example psalms 48 and 49. No names for them, other than the fact they are the ‘sons of Korah’. They have a talent for music. It is unlikely that these psalmists are direct sons of the Korah who rebelled against Moses and was punished by God, the chronology does not fit. Instead, they are likely to be from a wider ‘family’ with the name ‘Korahites’. For example, in 2 Chronicles 20:19 it says, “the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.” These Korahites appear to have been given a special musical gift which we see displayed in several psalms.

Although there are other points of view, many commentators believe Psalm 46 was written in the time of the reign of King Jehoshaphat, King of Judah (circa 871-849 BC). If so, it is helpful to read about Jehoshaphat in the light of Psalm 46. **2 Chronicles 20: 1-30** provides an interesting example of God’s mighty power when Jehoshaphat is faced with a multitude of enemies. Read the passage from Chronicles before the group meets, particularly **verses 15-30**. If you can, please offer to tell the group in your own words what happens. Review the account in the light of psalm 46. For example, do we learn if King Jehoshaphat trusts completely in the Lord or not? How? What rewards does Jehoshaphat receive? What long term benefits does Israel receive by this trust?

#### Psalm 46 under the microscope

Attached to the information you will receive from Val, as well as this help sheet for our study, is a single page with psalm 46 typed on to it. I used the psalm from the NKJV version of the bible; if the psalm in your bible looks slightly different to the copy I have used do not worry. I am sure the main themes are to be found in all the versions, despite minor differences in words chosen.

We will look at the psalm in three sections: lines numbered 1-3, up to the first 'Selah' (which as I understand it is a signal for a pause in the song). Then lines 4-7. Finally, 8-11.

- What is the tone of line 1 of the psalm? How does this start make you feel? Who is speaking?
- Last week we studied psalm 51, how does the start of that psalm compare with 46? Who is speaking in psalm 51 compared with 46? Why do the writers of psalm 46 use 'our' and 'we' in lines 1 and 2? What feelings does this convey to us?
- Lines 2 and 3 provide us with examples of powerful events in the natural world, what are they? Why has the author used these examples do you think? How are these examples relevant to the powerful start given by line 1?
  
- Lines 4 and 5 signal a change in the tone and pace of the psalm from the previous two lines. How do you react to lines 4 and 5?
- Where do you think this stream is that 'will make glad the City of God'?
- Line 5 says God will help this city, 'just at the break of dawn'. Why has dawn been chosen as the time of day that God will provide help? Does this tell us anything about God's help?
- Line 6 begins on a darker note. What do you think is happening to the nations and how was it resolved?
- Finally, in this section, line 7, a stand-alone line. Compare it with line 1. Why has line 7 been put right at the end of this section?
- Do you think there is any significance in Jacob being chosen to make it 'the God of Jacob'? Is there something about Jacob as an example that commends him rather than, say, Abraham?
  
- Lines 8 and 9. This is a God of achievements in these two lines. What has he achieved?
- Line ten takes us to a new level. Here is God speaking directly to us. How does he address us? What gives us the feeling of his authority and power? Why is his voice introduced into the psalm at the end? What does it add to our understanding?
- Finally, there is a repeat of the ending to the second stanza. How does this 'rounding off' of the psalm add to our understanding of the psalm and the message being conveyed? In what ways is God a 'refuge'?
- Finally, how would you sum up the message of this psalm in a sentence?

## A Mighty Fortress

Psalm 46 was transformed into a hymn by Martin Luther. Here is verse 1 of that hymn:

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 power are great,  
And, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

### What hope can we find in Psalm 46

- God will always provide help for his people.
- We need to trust in God and his ever-present help.
- There will be times when the world seems chaotic, out of control. God will still that chaos with an ever-flowing stream of His grace.
- We need to learn to be still at times and rely on God. Remember he has surrounded us with a strong fortress to withstand the shocks of life.

### Links to additional resources and help

[A table showing dates when individual psalms were written](https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/parallel/paral18.cfm)

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/parallel/paral18.cfm>

[Psalm 46 being read in Hebrew \(with English translation\)](https://youtu.be/OLe0AriM1os?si=jT8WK48oUp4R199T)

<https://youtu.be/OLe0AriM1os?si=jT8WK48oUp4R199T>