

Psalm 46

8/29/64

There are two possible times in the history of God's people when this Psalm could have been written:

- (1) During the reign of Jehoshaphat when Judah was attacked by the Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites — and God miraculously delivered Jerusalem and Judah. Delitzsch holds this view. The record is in 2 Chron. 20.
- (2) Others hold that it was written during the reign of Hezekiah when Judah was spared from the invading Assyrians under Sennacherib. Cf. 2 Kings 18, 19. Tausset and Clarke hold this view. Even Delitzsch feels that Psalm 46 was used at this time. The similarity between ^{the proph. of} Isaiah and this Psalm support this latter view. Cf. v. 4 with Isa. 36:1; v. 10, with Isa. 37:10.

But the Psalm clearly goes beyond any historical situation to the ultimate return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then and only then will He make wars to cease (v. 9, cf. Isa. 2:4). Its similarity to ^{Psalm 2 shows it is messianic.} This was Martin Luther's favorite Psalm and became the basis for "A Mighty Fortress".

The superscription of the Psalm seems to indicate that this Psalm was at least started by the Soprano women, possibly sung antiphonally with the men. (Note the change in person throughout the Psalm.)

Outline: The divisions are indicated by the musical word, Selah (v.v. 3, 7, 11).

46:1 This is the testimony resulting from experience

"God" - 7x in the Psalm (vv. 1, 4, 5 [2x], 7, 10, 11): ELOHIM.

"Lord" - 3x [vv. 7, 8, 11]: JEHOVAH.

"Strength" = 3x.

↓ self-existent
eternal
unchanging

↓ greatness,
glory,
sovereignty,
omnipotence,

"Very present" - one who allowed Himself to be found

"Trouble" - Luther puts this in the past by translating it, "in the great distresses which have come upon us."

46:2 "Therefore" - Experience with God in the past gives assurance for the future.

The Psalmist anticipates the worst, a return to the chaos of Gen. 1 or to the flood of Gen. 6-9 - that which God promised would never take place.

The earth changing

The mountains sinking

The waters roaring and rising so as to topple the mountains.

God can care for His own in the event of the worst eventuality.

46:4 "River" with "streams" - Cf. 2 K. 20:20; 2 Chr. 32:3, 4, 11, 30. Just as Hezekiah had a secret source of water which Sennacherib knew nothing about, so does the child of God in distress

"River" is in contrast with roaring troubled waters of vv. 2, 3.

46:5 God is likened to the river. The enemy would cut off all help from without, but he could not touch the resources from within - he did not even know about them.

"Right early" - at the turn of the morning.
Cf. Isa. 37:36.

46:6 - "Heathen" = Gentiles, nations

"Raged" - to become noisy

"moved" - ויד - same word in vv. 2, 5, 6. It means to totter, to approach ruin, to fail.

God's presence brings peace; God's voice brings deliverance. That which was brought into being by a word ("and God said" in Gen 1) can be destroyed by a word. Cf. Mt. 21:21.

"melted" - dissolved

When will this take place? Cf. 2 P. 3:10-12.

46:7 "Lord of hosts" - "God, at whose summons all created powers are obliged to marshal themselves like the hosts of war" Delitzsch, II, 95

"God of Jacob" - in recognition of all that Israel originally was.

"Refuge" - in v. 1 it is מִצְוֵה - a protection

in vv. 7, 11 it is מִצְוֵה - a high tower

The first is in Isa 4:6; Psa. 104:18.

(over)

46:8 - The evidence of the truth of vv. 1-7.

This is what He had done for them - not even through them. Cf. Isa. 37:36.

"Desolations" - astonishment, waste. The trouble is completely gone!

46:9 - The works of the Lord enumerated.

He causes wars to cease, and even destroys ~~the~~ implements of war. This will be true, ^{and total} disarmament.

46:10 - Now God speaks.

"Be still" - יָשׁוּב. It means to desist, set up. Cf. Psa. 37:8; 2 Sam. 24:16.

"Know" - come to know. The evidence was present; the meaning needed to be recognized. Such things could only mean one thing: that God is God.

"I will be exalted" - the end of all things. The earth will recognize its Lord.

46:11 The refrain repeated.

OUTLINE:

- I. God delivers from fear - a testimony of the ^{past}
- II. God delivers from falling - a confident assertion of the ^{present}
- III. God delivers from fretting - an invitation ^{concerning the future}

I. The first is true because of: (1) what He is; (2) where He is - availability.

II. The second is true because of: (1) secret resources; (2) omnipotence and timing.

III. The third is true because of: (1) the evidence which can be seen; (2) the promise of what is to come.