

Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

1. God present among His people.

- a. **(1-3)** The help of God greater than any crisis.
 - i. *God is* our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though its waters roar *and* be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

God is our refuge and strength: Many of the other psalms begin with a description of the psalmist's crisis. In Psalm 46, he begins with God's provision. He looked to God for help in difficult times and found it. He could say these things by experience:

- That God Himself was a place of **refuge**
- That God Himself was **strength** for His people, being strong for them and in them.
- That God alone was his **refuge and strength**, not God *and* something or someone else.
- That God Himself was their **help** – not from a distance, but a **very present help**.

A very present help: "The secret of the confidence is the consciousness of the nearness of God."

This has nothing to do with the safety or strength inside the creature. But everything with God and who he is.

Therefore we will not fear: The psalmist applied the logic of faith. If God is a real **refuge, strength, and help** to His people, then there is no logical reason to **fear** – even in the biggest crisis (**though the earth be removed**).

The earth be removed...the mountains carried...the waters roar...the mountains shake: The psalmist considered the most frightening, humbling natural phenomenon imaginable. He then made the reasoned estimation that God was greater than them all, and **fear** before these in some way robbed God of some of His honor.

Selah: The greatness of thought in this psalm was and is worthy of pause and careful thought.

2. (4-6) The peaceful provision of God.

- a. *There is* a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,
The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;
God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God: The psalmist pictured the abundant, constant provision of a **river** for Jerusalem. 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.

Jerusalem was unique among historical cities in that it had no great river. It had one tiny thread of water
“With God the waters are no longer menacing seas but a life-giving *river*.”

The **river** flows and makes all the **city of God** happy.

- The **city of God** is **glad** because life-giving water is always present in that dry, semi-arid land.
- The **city of God** is **glad** because the river has many **streams**, a picture perhaps connected to the rivers that watered the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14).
- The **city of God** is **glad** because a **river** is sometimes a picture of *peace* (Isaiah 48:18, 66:12). Jerusalem is in perfect peace.
- The **city of God** is **glad** because the city is secure, having one of the best defenses against an enemy besieging the city – guaranteed water.

God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: All the blessing and provision of **the city of God** comes because of God’s presence. Because of His presence she is more firmly set than the earth which may be moved (Psalms 46:2). The city is so established because **God shall help her**.

The nations raged...He uttered His voice, the earth melted: As in Psalms 2, God pays no regard to the rage of the nations. At His mere **voice** the earth melts away.

3. **(7) The confident chorus.**

- a. The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

The LORD of hosts is with us: The idea behind the title *Yahweh Sabaoth* is that He is the commander of armies, both the army of His people and the armies of heaven. The title emphasizes His glory and might, connecting it with the idea that *this* glorious God is **with** His people.

LORD of hosts: “Under whose command are all the hosts of heaven and earth, angels and men, and all other creatures.” “In fact, the conception underlying the name is that of the universe as an ordered whole, a disciplined army, a cosmos obedient to His voice.”

The God of Jacob is our refuge: The title **God of Jacob** not only emphasizes the aspect of covenant, but also grace – in that Jacob was a rather shabby character, not known for his great holiness. *This* gracious and merciful God is an open **refuge** for His people.

Is our refuge: “The word *refuge*, here and in verse 11, is distinct from that of verse 1, and implies inaccessible height: hence [New English Bible] ‘our high stronghold.’” (Kidner)

In these two phrases we see God in two aspects. He is the King of the multitude, the community, of all **hosts**. He is also the God of the individual, with personal relationship even to a **Jacob**.

God of Jacob: “When we say ‘The God of Jacob,’ we reach back into the past and lay hold of the Helper of the men of old.

4. The LORD exalted among the nations.

- a. **(8-9)** Beholding the works of the LORD.
 - i. Come, behold the works of the LORD,
Who has made desolations in the earth.
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.

Come, behold the works of the LORD: If the dominant idea in the first section of the psalm was God as a refuge and help, here the emphasis shifts to a consideration of the glory of God.

Who has made desolations in the earth: God is mighty to make **desolations** or to enforce peace, making **wars to cease**. The idea may be that God’s people are invited to look over the field of battle after God has completely routed His enemies, and their instruments of war are scattered, broken, and burning.

“Since God’s people have reason to be glad in distress because of God’s presence, how much greater will be their joy when the causes of distress are no more!”

5. (10) A word from God Himself.

- a. Be still, and know that I *am* God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!

Be still, and know that I am God: The idea is not that the faithful reader should stop activity and stand in one place. The sense is more that argument and opposition should stop and **be still**. This is done in recognition of God’s glory and greatness, as mentioned in the previous verse. **Jesus spoke to the storm and not the disciples on the boat when he said peace be still.**

“In this verse there is a change of person, and Jehovah 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.” (Horne)

The idea is something like this: “As you know the glory and greatness of God, stop your mouth from arguing with Him or opposing Him. Simply surrender.”

“*Be still*...is not in the first place comfort for the harassed but a rebuke to a restless and turbulent world: ‘Quiet!’ – in fact, ‘Leave off!’” (Kidner)

“In this setting, ‘be still and know that I am God’ is not advice to us to lead a contemplative life, however important that may be.... It means rather, ‘Lay down your arms. Surrender, and acknowledge that I am the one and only victorious God.’” (Boice)

Know that I am God: “Our submission is to be such as becomes rational creatures. God doth not require us to submit contrary to reason, but to submit as seeing the reason and ground of submission. Hence,

Sun am 11-26-23 Be still

the bare consideration *that God is God* may well be sufficient to still all objections and oppositions against the divine sovereign.” (Edwards, cited in Spurgeon)

I will be exalted among the nations: The appropriately silenced man or woman of God can glory in God’s exaltation. God’s triumph will extend far beyond Israel to all **the earth**.

6. **(11) The confident chorus.**

- a. The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

The LORD of hosts is with us: We can have the confidence that the same God exalted in all the earth is **with us**. We need no more.

Is with us: “On the day he died John Wesley had already nearly lost his voice and could be understood only 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.’” (Boice)

The God of Jacob is our refuge: We leave the psalm with confidence and serenity. This is worthy of reflection, closing with **Selah**.