

# A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Psalm 46

**Big Idea:** Though everything in this world is shaken, Christ is our unshakable refuge, our present help, and our future hope.

Introduction: One of the great questions every generation must answer is this:

## What can truly be trusted?

We build our confidence in governments, economies, careers, health, possessions, and even our own strength. Yet Psalm 46 reminds us that everything we tend to trust is temporary.

Martin Luther captured the heart of this psalm when he wrote:

*"A Mighty Fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing."*

Psalm 46 teaches that while creation itself trembles, **God's kingdom never does**. The world is unstable, but God remains our refuge, our fortress to run into and be saved.

## I. The World Is Shaken, But God Is Our Refuge

Psalm 46:1–3

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Notice the confidence of the psalmist.

Not, "God was..."

Not, "God will someday..."

But **God is**.

He is presently our refuge.

The Hebrew word **môṭ (וּמ)** appears repeatedly throughout the psalm. It means:

- to shake
- to totter
- to be moved
- to collapse

The Psalm intentionally repeats this word:

- Though the earth be moved...  
    Though the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...  
    Though kingdoms are moved...

**Everything around us is unstable.**

## **Creation is groaning**

The language is larger than earthquakes. Hebrew poetry is not intended to be taken literally but symbolic or “word pictures” representing ideas.

It describes a creation in decline.

- mountains falling
- roaring waters
- collapsing foundations

Paul says in Romans 8 that creation itself groans under the curse. Everything we see is slowly coming apart.

## **The Sea**

Throughout Scripture the sea often represents:

- chaos
- evil
- disorder
- instability

It is unpredictable. The mountains—the symbols of permanence—are swallowed by the sea. Even the strongest things humanity depends upon cannot stand forever.

## **The Last Days**

The shaking of creation also pictures the instability of human history.

- Kingdoms rise.
- Kingdoms fall.
- Wars continue.
- Nations rage.

Jesus described this rhythm in the Gospels:

"Wars and rumors of wars..."

This is not merely describing one future event. It is the continual condition of a fallen world awaiting redemption. Everything is shaking. Everything is temporary. Yet the people of God need not fear. Why? Because our refuge is not found inside the collapsing creation. Our refuge is Jesus Himself. No nation on earth has a future, only those in Christ look forward to a new city.

## II. God's Kingdom Cannot Be Shaken

Psalms 46:4–7

After roaring seas comes one of Scripture's most beautiful contrasts.

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God."

Notice the contrast.

- The sea roars.
- The river gives joy.
- The sea destroys.
- The river gives life.
- The sea represents chaos.
- The river represents God's presence.

## The River Through Scripture

This river flows throughout the Bible.

### Eden

Genesis 2 describes a river flowing from Eden, bringing life to creation.

### Ezekiel's Temple

Ezekiel sees water flowing from God's temple.

Wherever the river flows:

- deserts bloom
- dead things live
- healing comes

God's presence transforms everything it touches.

### Revelation

Finally, Revelation 22 shows: There is **no more sea**—the symbol of chaos and evil has passed away. Instead: "The river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

The Bible begins with a river. The Bible ends with a river. Because life has always flowed from the presence of God.

## Jesus and the River

Jesus fulfills this promise. In John 7 He declared: "Whoever believes in Me... out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." John tells us this river is the Holy Spirit. The life of God now flows through His people. The river that once flowed from Eden now flows through Christ into His Church.

## Cleansed by the River

This river also pictures cleansing.

- We are washed.
- Forgiven.
- Made new.

No wonder the psalm says: "The streams make glad the city of God." Joy comes because sinners have been cleansed. By faith we will rise and live in the new creation.

## III. The Lord of Hosts Is With Us

Psalm 46:7–11

Twice the psalm repeats: "The LORD of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

This is the covenant God. The God who made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God who never abandons His covenant and then we see and hear the gospel of how Jesus keeps covenant with God (for all who believe) and becomes the sacrificial lamb slaughtered for our salvation.

## Emmanuel

The phrase: "The LORD is with us" (Ps. 46:7) anticipates one of Scripture's greatest promises. Isaiah 7:14: "His name shall be called Emmanuel." God with us. Psalm 46 finds its fullest meaning in Jesus Christ. Christ is the presence of God among His people. He is our refuge.

## Morning Dawn

Verse 5 says: "God will help her when morning dawns." This echoes Exodus 14.

At daybreak God delivered Israel through the Red Sea. Israel passed through judgment into freedom. That historical Exodus points to a greater Exodus.

Through Christ: We pass through death. We leave the old creation. We enter new life. The Christian life is an Exodus. God is leading His people out of the slavery of sin into the inheritance of the new creation. And out of this body subject to death and into a new and glorious body that will not perish. And into the new earth where there is no decay or corruption.

# One Little Word

The enemies of God melt before Him. Luther echoed this truth: "One little word shall fell him." God simply speaks. His word never fails. Everything God declares comes to pass.

## Be Still

Finally God Himself speaks. "Be still, and know that I am God."

The command literally means:

- let go
- drop your hands
- stop striving
- cease fighting

Lay down your attempts to control the world. Stop trusting yourself. Recognize that God alone reigns. Lay down any fear of man. Lay down any desire to manipulate or save face. Come out of hiding.

## Three Ways Psalm 46 Points Us to Christ

### 1. Jesus Is Our Refuge

Hebrews 6:18 says: "We who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us." Christ Himself is the fortress into which sinners flee.

### 2. Jesus Gives the Living Water

The river flowing through Psalm 46 ultimately points to Christ. Through His Spirit He gives life to all who believe. He cleanses. He restores. He satisfies forever.

### 3. Jesus Is Exalted Above Every Nation

Psalm 46 ends: "I will be exalted among the nations." Jesus perfectly exalted His Father during His earthly ministry. Because of His obedience, Philippians 2 tells us: God highly exalted Him, gave Him the name above every name, and one day every knee will bow before Him. The nations that now rage will one day worship.

## Application

Where is your confidence today? The world constantly invites us to trust things that are shaking.

- Governments change.
- Economies fail.

- Health declines.
- Relationships disappoint.
- Even creation itself is wearing out.

But Christ remains.

- He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- Our refuge is not political stability.
- Our refuge is not financial security.
- Our refuge is not personal strength.
- Our refuge is Christ alone.

## **Conclusion**

The world continues to shake. But the people of God stand secure because their foundation cannot be moved. Our confidence rests not in a world that is passing away, but in the King whose kingdom can never be shaken. One day faith will become sight, the roaring sea will be no more, and the river of life will flow forever from the throne of God and of the Lamb.