

PSALM 46

LUTHER'S PSALM

The closing verses of the last Psalm spoke of Jesus' Bride being brought home to enjoy the heavenly Marriage-feast with Him forever. But before the dawn of that happy day, the earth shall shake with commotions, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, and pestilence – all combining to perplex and terrify the minds of men. But here we find the same Lord Jesus pictured as the Mighty One, giving strength to His own children in such perilous times!

The title of this composition is very interesting, for the words “on Alamo” mean “a choir of virgins” – as if this virgin-choir was particularly selected to sing a Psalm that tells of perils and fears and alarms abounding, in order to show that even delicate girls may sing without dread on that day, because of the Mighty One Who stands on their side to protect and defend and support them. They and the “sons of Korah” join in this lofty chorus of confidence. We all know how Martin Luther used to sing this Psalm in times of peril and alarm, and many others of the Lord's people have done the same in all ages. They sing of Jehovah as being “a very present help” – that is, a help that is always near at hand, whenever it is needed.

Here in these verses, we are encouraged to hope and trust in God's gracious power, Providence, and presence with His Church – even in the worst of times. We may apply it to our spiritual enemies; and it is indeed a precious encouragement when we remember that, through Christ, we shall be conquerors over them all. He is “a present help,” and we cannot desire any better; nor shall we ever find any better assistance from any earthly person or creature. The people of this world may very well be troubled at the troubling of the waters, since their confidence is only built upon a floating foundation. But let not God's children be alarmed when they are led to the Rock, for there they shall find firm footing. Here is joy to the Church, even in sorrowful times! The “river” of verse 4 alludes to the graces and consolations of the Holy Spirit, which flow through every part of the Church; and through Jehovah's sacred ordinances, they gladden the heart of every believer. And verse 5 also promises that the Church shall not be moved. If God is in our hearts, by His Word dwelling richly in us, then we shall surely be established and helped! Let us trust and not be afraid.

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

No matter what may happen, the Lord's people are happy and secure; this is the doctrine of this Psalm. In order to help our memories, it could be called “The Song of Holy Confidence” – except that from the great Reformer's love to this soul-stirring hymn, it will probably be best remembered as “Luther's Psalm.”

This composition is divided, by inspired authority, into three parts – each of which ends with “Selah.”



Come and see, in verses 6-11, the effects of desolating judgments among the heathen of this world; and then, as you behold them, stand in awe of God! And yet, in the midst of them all, the Lord's children are reminded to be calm and know that He is still God, and that He is still in control of all. This is an assurance of lasting peace for His Church! Let all believers triumph in the glorious truth that the Lord of hosts – the God of Jacob – has been, is, and will be with us as our Refuge. Oh! If the Lord is for us, who can be against us? With this comforting thought, we may answer every fear – whether in life or in death! We sing this Psalm to the praise of God; for He is with us, and He powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends His Church and His Word against all the assaults of the world, the flesh, the devil, and sin. That is why our little river of the

Lord's grace remains a fresh and living fountain, while so many tyrants and heretics and their doctrines become like so many stinking sewers. Like broken cisterns, they eventually disappear and are lost forever.

Lord, we repent of times when we have allowed our minds to become distracted and disturbed as we see all the upheavals in the world around us; for we may always rest assured that they are being orchestrated by You for Your people's blessing, and for the revealing of Your power and Your name to the nations of the world. We beseech You to make us glad with the river, the ocean, and the sea of Your Divine love. Cause our thirsty souls to drink now from this river, the streams whereof rejoice the soul; and bring us at last to that Kingdom and City which is above, where You lead Your redeemed ones to fountains of living waters, and where You forever dry away all tears from all eyes! Amen.