

# Psalm 46

## Psalm 46:1–11

## Omnipotent God is our Refuge in an Ever-Changing World

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### An Introduction to Psalm 46

**Introduction:** I originally attempted to place Psalm 46 as one of the psalms sung when David moved the Ark of God into Jerusalem for several reasons: There is a word found only here and in 1Chron. 15. There are a number of parallel phrases in this psalm, and in Psalm 24, which most theologians see as a psalm which celebrated the moving of the Ark. This is not a preponderance of evidence, and my idea was, *this psalm should be taught somewhere; why not at this juncture?* I have since changed my mind and believe that this psalm is best placed with 2Kings 19 and Isa. 36–37, sung (or inspired) by God's defeat of Sennacherib's army.

There is a basic theme which runs throughout this psalm, which can be changed ever so slightly for a different emphasis. This speaks to the individual believer, whether Jew or Christian, and how this believer may take refuge

in Jesus Christ. This speaks of the Jewish people, and how they might take refuge in our Lord. This speaks of the city of God—Jerusalem—and how it is preserved by God. This is arguably the primary focus of this psalm. One might also apply this psalm to the earth, and God’s preservation of the earth. In fact, midway through this psalm, there are verb forms which refer back to either the city of God or back to the earth; and giving a specific interpretation to this psalm is dependent upon assigning the antecedents to the verbs and prefixes. When one gives the latter interpretation to this psalm, there are some pretty fantastic statements about God’s relationship to the earth. However, no matter how one interprets this psalm, and to whom or to what it applies; the general understanding of this psalm can be easily applied to any of those entities named here—and applied to you as well.

McGee suggests that this and the next two psalms form a trilogy, prophetically speaking of God’s kingdom on this earth. I rejected this at first, but in re-reading this psalms several times, it reasonably appears this is a reasonable suggestion. What we find in prophetic writings are often parallel meanings. In this psalm, we speak of great natural destructions and of the destruction of war, and we are urged to place our trust in Jehovah Elohim. This is something that can be urged for the believer to do at any point in history. However, the disasters spoken of in this psalm are so great, and yet the resolve so complete, that it is reasonable to suppose this is written for those who are in the Tribulation who face incredible dangers, and on every side. This is contrasted with God’s peaceful city and God doing away with war, which is obviously a picture of our Lord’s rule in the Millennium. The two psalms which follow Psalm 46 also appear to have parallel applications.

David is not mentioned in the inscription of this psalm and it is likely that he did not write it. We will discuss this in the inscription. This was very likely written a few hundred years after the time of David. Most commentators place this psalm with Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, and how God defended His city by killing Sennacherib’s entire army. We’ll speak more of this later on in the introduction.

At first, I had a very difficult time organizing this psalm. It just did not sink into my brain to the point where I can discern the organization; therefore, when I broke the psalm up into sections, it was simply based upon the *selah*’s found at the end of vv. 3, 7 and 11. Believe it or not, since I have changed my mind as to the occasion of this psalm, it is beginning to gel more readily in my mind.

As I examine this psalm in greater depth, a pattern and a theme seem to emerge. The psalmist speaks of flood waters which are out of control, but then he speaks of a city (or the earth) which is sustained by water; and orderly rivers and streams are an absolute necessity to us. In a similar fashion, this psalm speaks of nations which are raging, which are out of control, just like flood waters. In contrast is the city of God, which is orderly and under control, we have nations raging out of control.

Vv. 1, 7 and 11 give us the overall theme of this Psalm: [God is our refuge; Jehovah of the Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our high place \(or stronghold\)](#). In vv. 2b–3, we have a list of natural disasters: earthquakes and floods, and we are told in v. 2a, not to be afraid. In vv. 4–5, we speak of a place of refuge—a city of God—which is fully protected by God. In v. 6, the implication is, this city will remain safe, even when nations are out of control and even when the earth melts (which could refer to volcanic activity or even nuclear weapons). In vv. 6–9, we are reminded of God’s marvelous works in the earth, which could include great devastation as well as the end of war altogether. In fact, the two may be possibly seen as connected. In v. 10, God will be exalted above all nations and over all the earth. The secondary theme here is, the God of Israel is the God of the Universe. He is not some powerful god, powerful in a particular geographical area. Prophetically, He will be recognized as such (v. 10).

Matthew Henry ignored the natural stops given in this psalm (the *selah*’s) and he breaks it up in a different way.

### Psalm 46 Outlined by Matthew Henry

Scripture	Summary
Psalm 46:1–5	I. To take comfort in God when things look very black and threatening
Psalm 46:6–9	II. To mention, to his praise, the great things he had wrought for Israel against her enemies.

## Psalm 46 Outlined by Matthew Henry

Scripture	Summary
Psalm 46:10–11	III. To assure ourselves that God who has glorified his own name will glorify it yet again, and to comfort ourselves with that.

Taken from Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction. I edited this by replacing *the church* with *Israel*.

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This psalm would have been appropriately sung during the moving of the Ark, but one could say that about many of the psalms. The God of Israel here is clearly seen as God over the entire earth; there are no limitations placed upon Him. Obviously, since the Ark represents Jesus Christ, and the Ark is being brought into Jerusalem, the universality of Jesus Christ is appropriate to the celebration. Be aware that, being appropriate to the occasion is not the same thing as unequivocally placing the singing of this psalm at that occasion. For similar reasons, one might place this psalm at the opening of Solomon's Temple. This would be a psalm to bring to mind during great personal and/or national disaster.

Because this psalm is not clearly identified with any particular historical incident, everyone has an opinion as to when it was composed.

The Occasion of Psalm 46	
Commentator	Comments
<b>Barnes</b>	<i>It is not possible now to ascertain the occasion on which the psalm was written. It was evidently in view of trouble, or of some impending calamity; apparently some national calamity, or some time when the nation was in danger, and when it was felt that their only refuge – their last hope – was in God. It would seem to be not improbable that the psalm was composed when wars were ragtag abroad in the earth; when the nations were convulsed; and when Jerusalem itself was besieged and threatened with ruin. The main thought of the psalm – the central idea in it – is, that, amidst these general and far-spreading agitations and convulsions among the nations of the earth, the people of God were safe. They had nothing to fear, even though those convulsions and agitations should be multiplied and increased; even though they should be carried so far that the very foundations of the earth should be shaken, and the mountains removed and carried into the midst of the sea.<sup>1</sup> Barnes then suggests a time and place: There was to them an Infinite Protector; there were unfailing sources of peace; they had nothing to dread. It was their duty, therefore, to be calm, still, confiding, for God would be exalted among the nations of the earth. It is possible that the psalm refers to the invasion of the land of Israel by Sennacherib, and to the miraculous destruction of his host, as recorded in 2 Kings 19 and Isa. 36; 37. All the circumstances in that invasion – the tumultuous hosts summoned for the war (Isa. 36:2); the overthrow of numerous nations by their armies (Isa. 36:18–21); the siege of Jerusalem itself (Isa. 36:2); the confidence of Hezekiah and of his people in God when the city was besieged (Isa. 37:14–20); and the final overthrow of the Assyrian host by the angel of the Lord (Isa. 37:36), agree well with all the statements in the psalm, and seem well to “illustrate” the psalm, though it be impossible now to determine with precise accuracy to what particular historical occasion it has reference. The circumstances in that invasion, however, are so similar to those supposed in the psalm, that, perhaps, we shall not be likely to err in supposing that the psalm “had” reference to that occasion.<sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Calmet</b>	<i>Calmet thinks it was composed by the descendants of Korah, on their return from the Babylonian captivity, when they had once more got peaceably settled in Jerusalem; and that the disturbances to which it refers were those which took place in the Persian empire after the death of Cambyses, when the Magi usurped the government.<sup>3</sup></i>
<b>Gill</b>	<i>Some think this psalm was occasioned by the victories which David obtained over the Ammonites and Moabites, and other neighbouring countries; and others are of opinion that it was penned on account of the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib being raised, in the times of Hezekiah: but it seems rather to be a prophecy of the church in Gospel times, and is applicable to any time of confusion and distress the nations of the world may be in through any kind of calamity, when those that trust in the Lord have no reason in the least to be afraid.<sup>4</sup></i>
<b>Houbigant</b>	<i>Houbigant thinks it was made on occasion of an earthquake, which he supposes took place on the night that all Sennacherib’s army was destroyed.<sup>5</sup></i>

<sup>1</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Barnes is so persuasive on this point, that I may end up moving this psalm to Isa. 36–37.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

The Occasion of Psalm 46	
Commentator	Comments
<b>Kimchi</b>	<i>Kimchi says this psalm belongs to future times; either to the gathering of the captives, or to the war of Gog and Magog; to which also R. Obadiah refers it, and Jarchi interprets it of time to come; according to the Targum it was written by the sons of Korah, when their father was hid from them, and they were delivered.<sup>6</sup></i>
<b>Keil and Delitzsch</b>	<i>When, during the reign of Jehoshaphat, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites (more particularly the Maonites, for in 2Chron. 20:1 it is to be read מִיְּנֹעֵי מַחֲמֵהָ) carried war into the kingdom of David and threatened Jerusalem, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziël the Asaphite in the temple congregation which the king had called together, and he prophesied a miraculous deliverance on the morrow. Then the Levite singers praised the God of Israel with jubilant voice, viz., singers of the race of Kohath, and in fact out of the family of Korah. On the following day Levite singers in holy attire and with song went forth before the army of Jehoshaphat. The enemy, surprised by the attack of another plundering band of the sons of the desert, had turned their weapons against one another, being disbanded in the confusion of flight, and the army of Jehoshaphat found the enemy's camp turned into a field of corpses. In the feast of thanksgiving for victory which followed in Emek ha-Beracha the Levite singers again also took an active part, for the spoil-laden army marched thence in procession to Jerusalem and to the temple of Jahve, accompanied by the music of the nabras, citherns, and trumpets. Thus in the narrative in 2Chron. 22:1–12 does the chronicler give us the key to the Asaphic Psalm 83 (76?) and to the Korahitic Psalm 46–48. It is indeed equally admissible to refer these three Korahitic Psalms to the defeat of Sennacherib's army under Hezekiah, but this view has not the same historical consistency. After the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign the congregation could certainly not help connecting the thought of the Assyrian catastrophe so recently experienced with this Psalm; and more especially since Isaiah had predicted this event, following the language of this Psalm very closely. For Isaiah and this Psalm are remarkably linked together.<sup>7</sup></i>
<b>Kukis</b>	I originally postulated that this psalm may have been composed and sung during the moving of the Ark. I based this only on some superficial similarities between this and Psalm 24 and there is the problem that, there may not have been sons of Asaph during David's time. Therefore, placing this psalm with Sennacherib's invasion might be the most prudent thing to do.

Given the precariousness of our nation in this present day, this might well be the psalm for you to commit to memory.

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Barnes comments: *This psalm has been called Luther's Psalm. It was that which he was accustomed to sing in trouble. When the times were dark; when the enemies of truth appeared to triumph; when disaster seemed to come over the cause in which he was engaged, and the friends of the Reformation were dissipated, disheartened, and sad, he was accustomed to say to his fellow-laborers, "Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm."<sup>8</sup> Martin Luther himself comments: *We sing this Psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us, and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends his church and his**

<sup>6</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>7</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>8</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction. .

*word, against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil, and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin. - Marlin Luther.<sup>9</sup>*

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## Psalm 46 Inscription

Slavishly literal:

**To the Preeminent [One]; for sons of Korah, upon virgins; a song.**

Psalm  
46 inscription

Moderately literal:

**To the Preeminent One; [and] for the sons of Korah, together with young women; a song.**

**To the One Who is Preeminent and for the sons of Korah, playing off the voices of a female chorus: a song.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate  
Masoretic Text  
Septuagint

Unto the end, for the sons of Core, for the hidden.  
To the Preeminent [One]; for sons of Korah, upon virgins; a song.  
For the end, for the sons of Core; a Psalm concerning secret things.

Significant differences:

The inscription is dramatically different; the Greek and Latin both have *to the end* at the beginning, and the Hebrew has *to the Preeminent [One]* (or, *to the choirmaster*). All 3 have *to [for] the sons of Korah*. The Latin and Greek again agree on the end of the inscription, *concerning [for] secret [hidden] things*; whereas the Hebrew speaks of *virgins*. It may even appear that the Greek and Latin agree that this is a psalm, but the Hebrew word for *song* is not really an exact match for the Greek word *psalmos* (ψαλμος). I would not claim to know which text is accurate, as the Latin and Hebrew are usually in agreement, over-against the Greek. Here, the Greek and Latin agree, and, interestingly enough, it is about *the end* and about *secret [hidden] things*. One could make an argument here that this psalm would apply to the end times and that there would be secret or hidden things within the psalm. Because of these great differences, I will give the Greek rendering of the inscription.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV  
*The Message*

(A special song for the people of Korah and for the music leader.)  
A song of the sons of Korah.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English  
Complete Apostles' Bible  
*God's Word*<sup>TM</sup>  
*The Scriptures* 1998

To the chief music-maker. Of the sons of Korah; put to Alamo. A Song.  
For the end, for the sons of Korah; A Psalm concerning secret things.  
For the choir director; a song by the descendants of Korah; according to alamo.  
[None]

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

*The Amplified Bible*

To the Chief Musician. [A Psalm] of the sons of Korah, set to treble voices. A song.

<sup>9</sup> Take from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.



English Standard Version	To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamothe. A Song. .
MKJV	To the Chief Musician. For the sons of Korah. A Song "For the Virgins".
Updated Bible Version 2.11	For the Chief Musician. [A Psalm] of the sons of Korah; set to Alamothe. A Song.
Young's Literal Translation	To the Overseer. --By sons of Korah. `For the Virgins.' --A song.

**What is the gist of this verse?** That this is performed or written for the Chief Musician (or the Preeminent One) is stated, along with the fact that this is for the sons of Korah. This song is apparently performed with young women.

### Psalm 46 inscription a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâtsach (נָצַח) [pronounced naw-TZAHKH]	<i>to oversee, to supervise; to be preeminent, to be enduring; the Preeminent One</i>	Piel participle with the definite article	Strong's #5329 BDB #663

The Piel participle of nâtsach is given a wide variety of renderings: *overseer* (Young), *the music leader* (CEV), *choir director* (NASB, NLT), *choirmaster* (Owens), *leader* (NRSV, NEB, NAB) and *chief musician* (Rotherham).

**Translation: To the Preeminent One;...** As we have seen with the numerous translations above, no one is clear as to who this person is. This psalm could be dedicated to God, which is essentially how I have translated it; however, it could be designed to be conducted by the chief musician, which is how Rotherham understands it. Most translators assume that this is given over to the choir director or the conductor or the one in charge of those who sang.

Unfortunately, the exact meaning of the lâmed preposition is also hard to determine. We find several psalms which are ascribed to David written *to David*; but the idea is, the psalm *belongs to David*. The lâmed preposition is used more often when something is given *to* someone else or something is *for* someone else, the chief meanings of the lâmed preposition. Despite the use of the lâmed preposition with David throughout the book of Psalms, I have taken this to me that this psalm is written *for* whoever this Preeminent person is.

Barnes comments on this portion of the inscription: *This phrase in the title, "To the chief Musician," occurs at the beginning of 53 psalms, and at the close of the hymn in Habak. 3:19. It is uniformly rendered "to the chief Musician," and means that the psalm was intended for him, or was to be given to him, probably to regulate the manner of performing it. In no one instance does the title imply that he was the author. The word rendered "Chief Musician" is derived from [ a Hebrew word] properly meaning "to shine," but not used in the Qal. In the Piel form it means to be conspicuous; to be over anything; to be chief; to be superintendent (2Chron. 2:2, 18 34:12) and then it means to lead in music. The meaning of the form used here, and in the other places where it occurs as a title to a psalm, is "Chief Musician," or precentor; and the idea is, that the psalm is to be performed under his direction; or that the music is to be directed and adapted by him.*<sup>10</sup>

Even though we have the same preposition used here as we find used with *David*, when he is the author, the many times that this phrase is found in combination with the author's name suggests more that there is a musical organization and that this song was delivered over to the Choirmaster (or conductor) of that organization to be sung and performed at various functions.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 4 introduction.

The NIV Study Bible has its opinion on this matter: *[For the director of music is] probably a liturgical notation, indicating either that the psalm was to be added to the collection of works to be used by the director of music in Israel’s worship services, or that when the psalm was used in the temple worship, it was to be spoke [or, sung?] by the leader of the Levitical choir—or by the choir itself (see 1Chron. 23:4–5, 30 [Of the overseers over the works of the house of the Lord there were twenty-four thousand, and there were six thousand scribes and judges; and four thousand gatekeepers, and four thousand to praise the Lord with instruments which he made to praise the Lord...to stand in the morning to praise and give thanks to the Lord, and so in the evening] 25 [assignments are given to the sons of Korah, among others]). In this liturgical activity the Levites functioned as representatives of the worshiping congregation. Following their lead the people probably responded with “Amen” and “Praise the LORD” (Hallelujah); see 1Chron. 16:36 Neh. 5:13; compare 1Cor. 14:16 Rev. 5:14 7:12 19:4.*<sup>11</sup>

Psalm 46 inscription b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong’s #1121 BDB #119
Qôrach (קֹרַח) [pronounced KOH-rahkh]	<i>ice, hail; bald; transliterated Korah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong’s #7141 BDB #901

**Translation:**...[and] for the sons of Korah,... The lâmed preposition here could mean that this is written by sons of Korah, or that this was written for the sons of Korah. What was said for the previous portion of this inscription applies here as well. Whereas, we might argue about what we find above, I think that it is reasonable that descendants of Korah became a well-known choir and their sons after them. This appears to be a tradition which continued in this family for a very long time.

Barnes on the authorship of this psalm: *The author of the psalm is unknown. It is not ascribed to David, but to “the Sons of Korah,” and there are no indications in the psalm that David was the author, or that it refers to his times. There is reason to believe that most of the psalms attributed to the “Sons of Korah” were composed subsequent to the time of David.*<sup>12</sup>

Barnes, on another psalm, goes into much more detail about the sons of Korah: *DeWette renders it, “A poem of the sons of Korah.” The psalms to which this title is prefixed are the Psalms 42 44 45 46 47 48 49 84 85 87 88. So far as the title is concerned, it may mean either that the psalms were dedicated to them, or that they were submitted to them for arranging the music; or that they were designed to be employed by them as leaders of the music; or that they were the authors of these psalms, that is, that the psalms thus indicated emanated from their body, or were composed by one of their number. Which of these is the true idea must be determined, if determined at all, from some other source than the mere title. The sons of Korah were a family of Levitical singers. Korah was a great-grandson of Levi (Num. 16:1). He was united with Dathan and Abiram in opposition to Moses, and was the leader of the conspiracy (Num. 16:2; Judges 1:11).*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 782 (footnote). Text slightly edited and some of the passages were included as well.

<sup>12</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 42 introduction.



Barnes continues: *Korah had three sons, Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph (Ex. 6:24) and of their descendants David selected a number to preside over the music of the sanctuary, (1Chron. 6:22–23, 31) and they continued in this service until the time of Jehoshaphat (2Chron. 20:19). One of the most eminent of the descendants of Korah, who was employed especially in the musical service of the sanctuary, was Heman (1Chron. 6:33: [Of the sons of the Kohathites; Heman, a singer](#)). The sons of Heman were appointed by David, in connection with the sons of Asaph, and of Jeduthun, to preside over the music: (1Chron. 25:1, 4, 6 2Chron. 5:12 29:14 35:1). The general appellation, the [“sons of Korah,”](#) seems to have been given to this company or class of singers. Their office was to preside over the music of the sanctuary; to arrange tunes for the music; to distribute the parts; and possibly to furnish compositions for that service. Whether, however, they actually composed any of the psalms is uncertain [I will discuss this below]. It would seem that the usual custom was for the author of a psalm or hymn designed for public service to deliver it, when composed, into the hands of these leaders of the music, to be employed by them in the public devotions of the people. Thus, in 1Chron. 16:7, it is said, [Then on that day David delivered first this psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.](#)<sup>14</sup>*

The NIV Study Bible gives us some information about this particular title: [“Sons of Korah”](#) refers to the Levitical choir made up of the descendants of Korah appointed by David to serve in the temple liturgy. The Korahites represented the Levitical family of Kohath son of Levi. Their leader in the days of David was Heman (see Psalm 88 title)—just as Asaph led the choir of the Gershonite and Jeduthun (Ethan) the choir of the Merarites (see 1Chron. 6:31–47 Psalm 39 title). This is the third of a collection of seven psalms ascribed to the [“Sons of Korah”](#) (Psalm 42–49); four more occur in Book III (Psalm 84–85 87–88).<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting that this phrase, [the sons of Korah](#), is found only in Books 2 and 3 of the psalms, and it may suggest either that the psalms were intentionally organized in this way, or that these psalms come from a specific period of time when the sons of Korah were musical leaders. Given that we have the lamed preposition, which is found in conjunction with David’s name when he authors a psalm, suggests to me that these men authored these psalms.

### Reasons Why the Sons of Korah Authored These Psalms

1. These psalms are located in a fairly narrow section of the book of Psalms, indicating that they belong to a specific time period.
2. Never is there another author listed in conjunction with the sons of Korah (we do have the phrase [for the Choirmaster](#), but that same phrase is often found in Davidic psalms as well).
3. When David is the author of a psalm, his name is preceded by the lamed preposition. When we find the phrase [the sons of Korah](#) in the title of a psalm, it is preceded by the lamed preposition.
4. The sons of Korah are musicians, and, as such, we would expect them to have original compositions.
5. We know that these men performed music when the Ark was moved to Jerusalem, which is a very spiritual moment (1Chron. 15). We also know that some psalms were performed at that event (1Chron. 16). However, it should be pointed out that none of the psalms listed above, where their names are found, are definitely found to be used during this celebration.
6. The musical sons of Korah that we are aware of took prominent positions when the Ark was moved into Jerusalem. Since God the Holy Spirit puts their names into Scripture, and since they held prominent positions in the reign of David, we would reasonably assume that these men had their heads screwed on right spiritually. Therefore, given that they are musicians, given that they are given some prominence in Scripture, we may reasonably conclude that they wrote spiritual songs.

Although it is certainly possible that these spiritual musicians only performed and never wrote any of their own music, to me, that is the least likely alternative.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 821 (footnote). Text slightly edited.

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Heman, Asaph and Ethan are the sons of Korah during the reign of David. However, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they have musically inclined children as well, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that their children were believers in Jesus Christ, the God of the Jews, as well. Therefore, even if we understand the sons of Korah to have written these psalms, that does not place the psalms necessarily in the time of David, as the authors may be sons of the sons of Korah.

Of all the psalms listed with the phrase of *[for?] the sons of Korah*, we also find the phrase *to the Choirmaster* in all of them except Psalm 48 & 88.

Psalm 46 inscription c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
When not showing a physical relationship between two things, ʿal can take on a whole host of new meanings: <i>on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, besides, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by on to, towards, to, against, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i> . It is one of the most versatile prepositions in Scripture. This word often follows particular verbs. In the English, we have <i>helping verbs</i> ; in the Hebrew, there are <i>helping prepositions</i> .			
ʿălâmôwth (עַלְמֹוֹת) [pronounced <i>guh-law-MOHTH</i> ]	<i>young women; soprano/falsetto singing</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5961 BDB #761
This is simply the plural form of:			
ʿalēmâh (עַלְמָה) [pronounced <i>gahl<sup>h</sup>-MAW</i> ]	<i>virgin; girl of marriageable age; [possibly] a newly married woman, a young woman</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5959 BDB #761

**Translation:**...[together with young women](#);... The preposition found here can mean several different things, and I suspect that we are speaking of the sons of Korah singing together with a female choir. The Amplified Bible apparently sees it this way as well, saying, in the inscription, that this is [set to treble voices](#). Others have suggested that this refers to high-pitched instruments.<sup>16</sup> The NIV Study Bible suggests that this might be maidens playing tambourines,<sup>17</sup> although where they come up with the idea that these maidens must be playing tambourines is beyond me.

Rotherham, in his footnote on this verse, sees it the same way: *according to maidens, i.e., with female voice (our treble or soprano) to indicate the style of music or singing*.<sup>18</sup>

I think that we are looking at singing combined with a chorus; perhaps the female chorus sings most of the psalm, while the male chorus (or complete chorus) sings vv. 1, 7 and 11. Perhaps, the idea of the psalm is, we are all helpless before world disasters, and our safety is in God.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>17</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 825 (footnote).

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 552 (footnote).

Now, even though I believe that the thrust of this word is to indicate a female chorus or female voices, there are a number of theories, which Gill presents (the reading of which may or may not be edifying): *The word "Alamoth" is thought by some, as Aben Ezra, to be the beginning of a song, to which this psalm was set; and by others a high tune, such as virgins express; and by others the name of musical instruments, as Jarchi and Kimchi; which seems most likely, since it is mentioned with other instruments of music in 1Chron. 15:19; and may not unfitly be rendered "virginals", from the sound of them being like the shrill voice of virgins, which this word signifies; though others choose to render it "of hidden things", (s), making it to design the subject matter of the psalm, the secret counsels and purposes of God, both in a way of love and grace to his people, and of judgment to his enemies.*<sup>19</sup>

Now, to be quite frank, the only reason that I tried to tie this psalm to the transporting of the Ark of God in 1Chron. 16 is this word, which is found only here and in 1Chron. 15:20. Given that the previous psalm which we studied (Psalm 24) undoubtedly had a give and take between two groups of singers, it would make sense that these young women would be named in 1Chronicles. Therefore, my particular placement of this psalm would not be valid.

### Psalm 46 inscription d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shîyr (שִׁיר) [pronounced sheer]	song, singing; music	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7892 BDB #1010

**Translation: ...a song.** This psalm was written to be performed. It was written to be sung. The psalmist even specifies that male and female groups of singers need to be involved.

Barnes: *The word "song" in the titles to Psalms 30 45 48 65–68 75 76 83 87 88 92 108 120–134. Nothing seems to be indicated by it in regard to the nature and character of the psalms where it is found.*<sup>20</sup> As above, I don't think that it is unreasonable to suppose that these psalms had been composed and arranged to be performed. What that would say about the other psalms, however, is not clear. The NIV Study Bible points out that these are psalms of praise (with the exception of Psalms 83 and 88). The final group of psalms (120–134) are *songs of ascents*.

As has been previously discussed, The Greek and Latin text vary significantly from the Hebrew text. Therefore, I find it necessary to give you the original Greek text. Although the Greek and Latin texts are almost identical and although the Hebrew usually agrees with the Latin even when there is a disparity with the Greek text; still, we do not know for certain which is the preferable text. For me, I give a 60% likelihood to the Greek text being the most accurate text. None of the English translations which I have (including the NKJV, Rotherham's Emphasized Bible and the NRSV) speak a word about the difference in the text. I find this to be disappointing. Of the two dozen translations which I have, only one, the Complete Apostles' Bible, uses the Greek text.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>20</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46 introduction.

<sup>21</sup> Since I use the e-sword version, I have no idea whether the original text is footnoted or not.

## Psalm 46 inscription; Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
eis (εἰς) [pronounced ICE]	<i>to, toward; into; in the vicinity of, near, on; concerning, on, for [with respect to time]; unto, in order to, for, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on what basis; with respect [reference] to; because of, on account of</i>	directional preposition	Strong's #1519
to (τό) [pronounced toh]	<i>the; this that</i>	neuter singular definite article; accusative case	Strong's #3588
telos (τέλος) [pronounced TEHL-oss], which	<i>limit, conclusion, result, end; toll, custom</i>	neuter singular noun	Strong's #5056
hupér (ὑπέρ) [pronounced hoop-AIR]	<i>above, beyond, across; for, regarding, on behalf of, for the sake of, instead of; in favor of, because of, on account of</i>	preposition with the genitive case	Strong's #5228
tôn (τῶν) [pronounced tohn]	<i>the</i>	plural definite article; genitive and ablative cases	Strong's #3588
huios (υἱός, οὐ, ό) [pronounced hwee-OSS]	<i>children, sons, descendants; pupils; followers</i>	masculine plural genitive/ablative noun	Strong's #5207
Kore (Κορὲ) [pronounced kohr-EH]	<i>baldness; transliterated Kore, Korah</i>	masculine singular, indeclinable proper noun	Strong's #2879
hupér (ὑπέρ) [pronounced hoop-AIR]	<i>above, beyond, across; for, regarding, on behalf of, for the sake of, instead of; in favor of, because of, on account of</i>	preposition with the genitive case	Strong's #5228
tôn (τῶν) [pronounced tohn]	<i>the</i>	plural definite article; genitive and ablative cases	Strong's #3588
kruphion (κρυφίον) [pronounced crew-FEE-on]	<i>secret, hidden, concealed</i>	masculine (neuter?) plural adjective; genitive case	Strong's #none
<p>These meanings were derived from the Greek verb <i>kruptô</i> (κρύπτω) [pronounced KROOP-toh], which means <i>to hide, conceal, to be hid; escape notice; metaphorically to conceal (that it may not become known)</i>. Strong's #2928. There is, by the way, a Greek noun found in the New Testament which corresponds to this verb (Strong's #2927).</p>			
psalmos (ψαλμός, οὐ, ό) [pronounced psahl-MOSS]	<i>psalm, praise, song of praise</i>	masculine singular noun, locative, instrumental or dative case	Strong's #5568

**Translation:** To [concerning, near] the end; for the children of Korah regarding secret [hidden] things; a psalm. The difference between the Greek and the Hebrew were so marked as to require a reading from the Greek (particularly, as the Latin is closer to the Greek than to the Hebrew).<sup>22</sup>

This psalm deals with *the end*. This does not necessarily mean *the end times* or *the Tribulation*, as we have common Greek words for those phrases. This is an apt phrase, indicating, to those who observe the events of this psalm, that the nation Israel (or their city or their location) is coming to a cataclysmic end. Although this psalm was probably written during the time that Sennacherib first brought his troops to Jerusalem and that God wiped them out one morning—this could refer to any great disaster which threatens the existence of a city or of a large group of people. Such a title is apt to this psalm; however, aptness is not a good enough reason to adopt this ancient text over the Hebrew. Recall that, in any translation, we should expect the translation to make more sense than the original. We have seen innumeral situations where the Hebrew text was very difficult, but that the English text in almost over English translation was smooth and easy to understand. This is what is done with a translation. Therefore, if the text was obscure or if the text could not be read, a quick perusal of this psalm would suggest that this is a psalm about *the end*.

The only place where this psalm is in agreement with the Hebrew text is that it is apparently dedicated to or given to *the sons of Korah*; or, it was written by *sons of Korah*. I chose the latter explanation and this is explained above in greater detail (see [Reasons Why the Sons of Korah Authored These Psalms](#)).

One of the last words in this verse is difficult to define, as I was unable to find it online or in my Greek lexicons, which primarily examine New Testament words. It is possibly related to a common New Testament verb, and was given a meaning which corresponded to this verb. This word is *not* a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew text.

If this is a psalm of *hidden things*, then we may reasonably suspect that there may be some hidden meanings within this psalm. However, our problem here is twofold: (1) this is not what the Hebrew text says; and (2) the meaning of the Greek word is probable, but not assured. On the other hand, there are several verses in this psalm which appear to have more than one meaning, which would correspond quite nicely with our supposed meaning of this Greek word.

The final word is a *psalm*, which does not correspond exactly with the Hebrew word for *song*. That this is a psalm is clear; and given the organization and refrain, it is probably a song as well (which we would expect, given that it was probably composed by sons of Korah).

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## Even in Great Natural Disasters, God is our Refuge

Slavishly literal:

**Elohim to us refuge and strength  
a help in affliction being found  
exceedingly.**

Psalm  
46:1

Moderately literal:

**Elohim [is] to us [our] refuge and [our]  
strength;  
being discovered [as] great help [when] in  
distress.**

**God is to us our refuge and our strength;  
He exists as our great help when in distress.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

<sup>22</sup> This requires some comment: in the psalms, where the LXX is different from the MT, the Latin generally agrees with the Greek. In historical texts, e.g., Samuel or Chronicles, where the Greek and Hebrew differ, the Latin and Syriac are generally in agreement with the Hebrew.



**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text                    Elohim to us refuge and strength  
a help in affliction being found exceedingly. This is v. 2 in the Hebrew.

Septuagint                        God [is] our refuge and strength, a help in the afflictions that have come heavily upon us.

Significant differences:        The verb found here is actually the correct parallel verb to the MT; it is unclear in the Hebrew as to whom we should apply the verb.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV                                    God is our mighty fortress, always ready to help in times of trouble.

Good News Bible (TEV)        God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

*The Message*                    God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him.

NET Bible®                        God is our strong refuge;  
    he is truly our helper in times of trouble.

New American Bible            God is our refuge and our strength,  
    an ever-present help in distress.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Bible in Basic English        God is our harbour and our strength, a very present help in trouble.

Complete Apostles' Bible     God is our refuge and strength, a help in the afflictions that have come heavily upon us.

*od's Word*™                    God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.

HCSB                                God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble.

JPS (Tanakh)                    God is refuge and stronghold,  
    a help in trouble, very near.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

*The Amplified Bible*        God is our refuge and strength [mighty *and* impenetrable to temptation] a very present and well-proved help in trouble.

LTHB                                God *is* our refuge and strength, very much found to be a help in distresses.

WEB                                 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Young's Updated LT         God *is* to us a refuge and strength, found *to be* a help in adversities most surely.

**What is the gist of this verse?** God is our strength and refuge, and we find Him to be our help during times of distress and adversity.

Psalm 46:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods</i> or <i>God</i> ; transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> °]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

## Psalm 46:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mach <sup>e</sup> çeh (מַחֲצֵחַ) [pronounced mahkh <sup>e</sup> -SEH]	refuge, shelter; the person to whom one flees	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4268 BDB #340
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ôz (אֹז) [pronounced gôhz]	strength, might; firmness, defense, refuge, protection; splendor, majesty, glory praise	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5797 BDB #738

**Translation:** Elohim [is] to us [our] refuge and [our] strength;... The first half of this verse is quite simple. God is our refuge, our shelter, the person to whom we flee; He is also our strength and our protection. I have inserted the possessive pronouns *our*, as I think it is the gist of the understanding of this verse. Both the Tanakh and the NIV Study Bible insert the personal pronoun as well. This would be a reasonable substitute for the phrase *to us*. That is, this could be reasonably rendered **Elohim is our refuge and our strength**.

The NET Bible notes: "*our refuge and strength,*" is probably a hendiadys meaning "*our strong refuge*" (see Psalm 71:7—*Many are appalled when they see me, but you are my secure shelter*). Another option is to translate, "*our refuge and source of strength.*"<sup>23</sup>

It comes from a verb which means *to flee, to flee to*.<sup>24</sup> Refuge is a place to where we go to during times of great pressure or trouble. This might be a bomb shelter, a safe room or a properly constructed building during storms, high winds and tornados. This word sets the tone for this psalm; it is going to become clear that there are great national disasters and that our safe room is Jehovah, the Elohim of Israel, Jesus Christ.

The Contemporary English Version renders *refuge* as *fortress*, and comments: *Historically, a fortress was a ace of protection for people during times of trouble. Often, during times of war, soldiers guarded these structures and gave the people inside a strong sense of security. If there was any safe place to be, the fortress was the safest. Psalm 46:1 tells us that God is "our mighty fortress." He is our mightiest protection, our strongest security, and our safe place to go to in times of trouble.*<sup>25</sup>

**Application:** People constantly get confused when it comes to dependence upon God. This does not mean that we abandon all common sense. When we are on the roof of our home, and the water is rising, and we are praying for deliverance, and someone with a boat comes by and offers us a ride, we don't refuse and say, "I am waiting on God to deliver me." That boat is God providing you the deliverance. When there are tornados in your area or high force winds and devastating rain showers, and there is a recommended safe place in your house where you can go, then it is reasonable to go to that place.

Spurgeon writes: "*God is our refuge and strength.*" *Not our armies, or our fortresses. Israel's boast is in Jehovah, the only living and true God. Others vaunt their impregnable castles, placed on inaccessible rocks and secured with gates of iron, but God is a far better refuge from distress than all these: and when the time comes to carry the war into the enemy's territories, the Lord stands his people in better stead than all the valour of legions or the boasted strength of chariot and horse. Soldiers of the cross, remember this, and count yourselves safe, and make yourselves strong in God.*

<sup>23</sup> The Net Bible®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:1 (footnote).

<sup>24</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:1.

<sup>25</sup> *The Promise* (The Contemporary English Version); Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1995; p. 617. Edited somewhat.

Forget not the personal possessive word “our;” make sure each one of your portion in God, that you may say, “He is my refuge and strength.” Neither forget the fact that God is our refuge just now, in the immediate present, as truly as when David penned the word. God alone is our all in all. All other refuges are refuges of lies, all other strength is weakness, for power belongs to God: but as God is all-sufficient, our defence and might are equal to all emergencies.<sup>26</sup>

There are a number of parallel verses:

God is our Refuge	
Scripture	Quotation
Psalm 18:2	The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
Psalm 46:7	The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.
Psalm 62:7–8	On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.
Psalm 91:1–2:	He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
Psalm 91:9–10	Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place-- the Most High, who is my refuge-- no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.
Psalm 142:5	I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."
Prov. 14:26	In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.
Prov. 18:10	The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.
Heb. 6:17–18	So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

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God is also our strength, defense and our refuge. These words foreshadow the need for God to be these things to us.

Psalm 46:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿez <sup>o</sup> râh (הַצִּלָּה) [pronounced éz <sup>o</sup> -RAW]	help, aid, assistance	feminine singular substantive	Strong's #5833 BDB #740

<sup>26</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 46:1.

Psalm 46:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
tsârâh (צָרָה) [pronounced tzaw-RAW]	<i>anguish, adversity, affliction, travail, trouble and distress</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6869 BDB #865
mâtsâ' (מָצְאוּ) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
m <sup>e</sup> ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

The NET Bible says that this adverb simply has an emphasis function for this portion of v. 1.<sup>27</sup>

**Translation:** ...being discovered [as] great help [when] in distress. The second part of this verse is more difficult; it is difficult to determine how the verb should be applied. If we apply the verb to God, *He is found [to be] a great help [when we are] in adversity [and affliction]*. I think this is the way that it should be understood. One problem, however, with this interpretation, is where I have located the adverb. The adverb appears to modify the verb and not the word *help*.

The other way is to understand that *[our] great help in adversity is present*. That is, the verb is applied to *help*. Again, there is the problem with the placement of the adverb. Some translators appropriately change the meaning of the adverb and apply it to the verb.

You might think that I am obsessing at this point, but even the most literal texts disagree on the application of this verb, as well as the understanding of the adverb.

To Whom Does the Verb Apply?	
Translation	Text
The verb is translated as a regular verb, not as a participle, and the adverb is applied to the noun <i>help</i> .	
Clarke	[God is our refuge and strength]; He is found an exceeding, or superlative help in difficulties. <sup>28</sup> Clarke tried here to give a very literal rendering, which emphasis upon the adverb.
The adverb is properly applied to the verb; together, they modify <i>help in adversity</i> :	
A conservative Version	God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Bible in Basic English, the Hebrew Names Version, the King James' Version and the Voice in the Wilderness Bible are very similar here.
God's Word™	God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.
New Jerusalem Bible	God is both refuge and strength for us, a help always ready in trouble.

<sup>27</sup> The Net Bible®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:1 (footnote).

<sup>28</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:1.

To Whom Does the Verb Apply?	
Translation	Text
Revised English Bible	God is our refuge and our stronghold, a timely help in trouble;...
The verb is applied to <i>affliction, adversity</i> :	
The Complete Apostles' Bible	God is our refuge and strength, a help in the afflictions that have come heavily upon us.
The verb is applied to <i>God</i> in the passive sense:	
Holman Christian Standard Bible	God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble.
Literal Translation of the Holy Bible	God is our refuge and strength, very much found to be a help in distresses.
The application of the verb is not clear:	
The Scriptures 1998	Elohim is our refuge and strength, A help in distress, soon found. Notice that the verb could be seen to apply to <i>help</i> , however, it essentially refers back to <i>God</i> . This may be more in line with our verse, where the understanding of the verb is also in question. Rotherham's translation is very similar.
The verb itself is not clear:	
The Amplified Bible	God is our refuge and strength [mighty <i>and</i> impenetrable to temptation] a very present and well-proved help in trouble.
The Tanakh	God is our refuge and stronghold, a help in trouble, very near.
As you see, we have little agreement here. If all of the translations were put down next to one another, <i>an ever-present help in adversity</i> would be found the most often, but that is primarily in deference to the KJV.	
It is quite interesting that, despite the variety of ways that we can apply this verb and adverb here, the gist this verse is quite clear: <b>God is our refuge and our strength; He is found to be a great help to us during times of trouble.</b>	

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Another way to understand this is, God has been consistently found to be help to us during times of trouble. The idea is, we have an incident during which we need God's help, and we call upon Him and He responds to us; another problem occurs and we call upon Him, and we find that God comes to our assistance again. Barnes suggests that God has *proven* Himself to be a help to us during times of need. Even though this verb is pretty far from being found to be our help in times of trouble, when this occurs again and again, and God is found again and again to be a help to us, then we learn to trust Him; He has proven Himself to be a help to us in times of disaster. The additional adverb *very, exceedingly* indicates to us that this is emphatically true. Therefore, we have no reason to be afraid or rattled or shaken up during times of trouble.<sup>29</sup>

McGee comments: *Most people think they are the only ones who have ever had trouble, but God's people find God sufficient in time of trouble. Psalm 46 was Martin Luther's favorite psalm. When he wrote that great Reformation hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," he probably had this in mind.*

<sup>29</sup> Essentially the ideas of Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:1.



*God is our refuge, and our strength, and a very present help when we are in trouble. Men down through the ages have found this to be true.*<sup>30</sup>

Zodhiates comments on this verse: **[God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble]** God is a “present help” for those who depend upon Him, but the unregenerate have no access to Him (Psalm 10:1 Lam. 3:44 Ezek. 20:3). Even His children do not have access to the fullness of His glory (Ex. 33:20 1Tim. 6:16). The phrase “very present” in the Hebrew...emphasizes the speed, completeness, and the might of the Lord’s help.<sup>31</sup>

Gill writes concerning the last half of this verse: **a very present help in trouble**; whether [this trouble is] inward or outward, of soul or body; the Lord helps his people under it to bear it, and he helps them out of it in the most proper and seasonable time: they are poor helpless creatures in themselves; nor can any other help them but the Lord, who made heaven and earth; and he helps presently, speedily, and effectually: in the Hebrew text it is, **“He is found an exceeding help in trouble”**; in all kind of trouble that the saints come into, the Lord has been found, by experience, to be an exceeding great helper of them; moreover, he is easily and always to be come at, and found by them for their help.<sup>32</sup>

It is possible that this psalm—this verse and the next—inspired Martin Luther’s powerful lines:

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.  
Our helper He, amid the flood, of mortal ills prevailing.

Because of the language of this first verse, we should expect great turmoil to be presented in the second.

<p><b>Upon so we do not fear in a changing of earth; and in a shaking of mountains in a heart of seas.</b></p>	<p>Psalm 24:2</p>	<p><b>Therefore, we are not afraid when the earth changes; when mountains totter into the midst of the seas.</b></p>
<p><b>Therefore, we are not afraid in the face of the greatest natural disasters; even when mountains crash into the midst of the seas.</b></p>		

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

Upon so we do not fear in a changing of earth;  
and in a shaking of mountains in a heart of seas.

Septuagint

Therefore will we not fear when the earth is agitated [or, troubled], and the mountains are removed into the depths of the seas.

Significant differences:

The second verb, although somewhat different than my English rendering, is a reasonable translation of the Hebrew verb. Recall that primarily what we look for here is evidence of textual differences between the present Masoretic text and the Hebrew text used by the Greek translators. What appears to be the case, and I can’t explain why, is that the 2<sup>d</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> verbs seems to be transposed. In the Hebrew text, the 2<sup>nd</sup> verb means *to change, to exchange* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> verb in the Greek means *to transpose, to transfer, to change*. The 3<sup>rd</sup> verb in the Hebrew means *to shake, to dislodge, to totter*; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> verb in the Greek means *to*

<sup>30</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 42–89*, ©1991 by J. Vernon McGee; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; pp. 32–33.

<sup>31</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 1443 (footnote, slightly edited).

<sup>32</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:1. To support his *literal* rendering, Gill footnotes with a word or two from the Hebrew and “*inventum valde*”, *Michaelis*.

*agitate, to trouble, to stir up.* This is not a big problem, and it is possible that the Greek translators took some minor liberties here.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	And so, we won't be afraid! Let the earth tremble and the mountains tumble into the deepest sea.
<i>The Message</i>	We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom, courageous in sea storm and earthquake,.
NET Bible®	For this reason we do not fear when the earth shakes, and the mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,...
New Jerusalem Bible	so we shall not be afraid though the earth be in turmoil, though mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,...
New Living Testament	So we will not fear, even if earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word™</i>	That is why we are not afraid even when the earth quakes or the mountains topple into the depths of the sea.
HCSB	Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas,...
New International Version	Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	Therefore we do not fear, Though the earth reels And mountains topple into the heart of the seas.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

English Standard Version	Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,...
King James 2000 Version	Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;...
LTHB	On account of this we will not fear when the earth changes and when mountains are slipping into the heart of the seas.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	Therefore we will not fear, though the earth changes, And though the mountains shake into the heart of the seas;...
A Voice in the Wilderness	Therefore we will not fear when the earth changes, when mountains are slipping into the midst of the seas.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Therefore we fear not in the changing of earth, And in the slipping of mountains Into the heart of the seas.

**What is the gist of this verse?** In the greatest of natural disasters, we are not afraid.

Psalm 24:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (ʿל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i> ]	<i>so or thus</i>	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

## Psalm 24:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, ʿal kên (עַל כֵּן) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason.</i>			
lôʾ (לוֹא אוּ לֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yârêʾ (יָרֵא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAY</i> ]	<i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

**Translation:** *Therefore, we are not afraid...* This goes back to the first verse, where God is our refuge in times or trouble, and the result of knowing this is, *therefore, we are not afraid.* Understanding our relationship to God makes our life on earth much easier. We will see great disasters, and even more now, with the advent of television and instant news. However, we need not concern ourselves with what occurs around us, as we are related to God.

## Psalm 24:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bê (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mûwr (מוּר) [pronounced <i>moor</i> ]	<i>to exchange; to change</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #4171 BDB #558
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** *...when the earth changes;...* Here is also an amazing thing for David (or, whoever the psalmist is) to speak of. In his short life, we have no idea what he had observed. We know that mountains are formed and we know that they erode; we know that, over the time that the earth has been here, there have been tremendous changes of seas, mountains, rivers and lakes. However, the psalmist would not necessarily have observed anything like this; however, the psalmist still acknowledges here that there are great changes which take place. Now, I live in the south where we see an occasional hurricane and tornado, as well as some spectacular storms. I don't know that the Land of Promise has the opportunity to observe such drastic phenomenah, and there is nothing in this psalm which seems to approximate these kinds of natural disasters. However, this psalmist, with apparently little or no evidence, speaks of the earth changing, and, in the next portion of this verse, it will be clear that he is speaking of great and drastic changes.

## Psalm 24:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
môwt (ט מ ו) [pronounced mohṭ]	<i>to shake, to totter, to move, to dislodge, to throw into disorder or disarray</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4131 BDB #556

The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.

har (ר ה) [pronounced har]	<i>mountains, hills</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
lêb (ל ב) [pronounced lay <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3820 BDB #524
yâm (ם י) [pronounced yawm]	<i>sea, lake, river, seaward, west, westward</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3220 BDB #410

The plural here is probably used for emphasis, or to indicate the deepest portion of the seas. The suffix which will refer back to the seas will be a masculine singular suffix.<sup>33</sup>

**Translation:** *...when mountains totter into the midst of the seas.* Here we have a tremendous change in landscape, where mountains totter and fall into the seas. Obviously, we are speaking of great earthquakes, possibly floods, and we are speaking of the greatest disaster which could possibly occur—mountains tumbling into the seas. Actually observing this in person, which is what is suggested here, although awesome, should not be a cause for fear in the believer in Jesus Christ.

The actual phrase which is found here is *...when mountains totter into the heart of the seas.* It should be clear that the oceans do not possess a heart or hearts, and that what is meant is, *...when mountains totter into the seas [or, into the midst of the seas]*. Bullinger tells us that sometimes the word *heart* is used when we are not speaking literally of the precise middle point (whatever that could be in relation to the oceans).<sup>34</sup>

In part, I think what we have here is hyperbole. A bit of an exaggeration. Now, it is true that an earthquake can bring portions of a mountain down, and, for all I know, there may even be recorded instances in geographical history where this has occurred. However, this is not an every day event; nor is this even an event which we observe every decade or even every 50 years. Since we are dealing with an entirely uncommon event, we should

<sup>33</sup> *The Net Bible®*; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:2 (footnote).

<sup>34</sup> *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 412.

recognize that hyperbole is being used here. We could witness a mountain falling into the midst of the seas—we could witness, say, the sudden drop of a mountain island in the midst of the ocean—and even at the sight of this, our focus should be upon our refuge in God. However, bear in mind, the crises that we face, from day to day and year to year, pale by comparison to this somewhat exaggerated event. The writer chooses one of the most unlikely things for a person ever to witness, and uses this as an example of a time when we should maintain our faith in God.

This understanding of hyperbole here also helps us to understand when Jesus says this to his disciples: **And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.** (Matt. 21:21). Quite frankly, I have known only one or two very strong believers who have prayed this prayer and then witnessed a mountain being thrown into the sea (okay, maybe none). This is *hyperbole*. Our prayer is seen as greatly powerful, even beyond one's imagination. Is it not the actual event of a mountain being flung into the sea which is the emphasis here; it is the power of prayer which is being emphasized. Just as, in our passage, it is not the event of a mountain tottering into the sea which is emphasized, but God's ability to be our strength and our refuge in times of trouble.

Barnes comments: *This may either be understood literally, as implying that they should not be afraid though the mountains, the most fixed and firm things of earth, be uprooted and sunk in the ocean - implying that nothing earthly was stable; or, the mountains here may be referred to as emblems of that which seemed to be most settled and established on earth - the kingdoms of the world. The idea is, that in any convulsion - any change - any threatened danger - they would place confidence in God, who ruled over all, and who could not change.*<sup>35</sup>

Gill applies this verse: *The consideration of the Lord's being the refuge, strength, and help of his people, in all times of trouble and distress, has a great influence on their faith and confidence, and makes them intrepid and fearless in the midst of the greatest dangers: nor indeed have they any reason to be afraid of men or devils, since the Lord is on their side; nor should they indulge a slavish fear on any account whatever.*<sup>36</sup>

Spurgeon: *Let the worst come to the worst, the child of God should never give way to mistrust; since God remains faithful there can be no danger to his cause or people. When **the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens and the earth shall pass away** in the last general conflagration, we shall serenely behold "the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds," for even then our refuge shall preserve us from all evil, our strength shall prepare us for all good.*<sup>37</sup>

Or, as we read in Psalm 102:25–27: **Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.** The heavens and the earth will change, but God remains the same throughout. Or, as David wrote, in Psalm 23:4–6: **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.** And in the New Testament: Heb. 13:6: **So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"**

**Application:** Periodically, I am dumbfounded by this world, and, in particular, by that which occurs within this nation. There are college professors and television personalities who say, without even a shred of evidence, that somehow President George Bush colluded with Osama Ben Laden to take out the world trade center (apparently Bush had explosives placed throughout the buildings). What is shocking is, I have heard people clap and cheer

<sup>35</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:2.

<sup>36</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:2.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 46:2.



when these opinions are expressed; and I have heard intelligent people say, *despite all the evidence to the contrary*, they are entitled to their opinions, and their opinions are just as reasonable as anyone else's. We've gibe from the point where all philosophical opinions are of equal value to all opinions of events which we have actually observed have equal value, and are equally valid (with the exception of global warming; one should not have an alternate opinion in this area). I see these events unfold—particularly disconcerted when people cheer and clap when they hear what is absolute, unscientific nonsense—and I have to console myself with, God does not change; God can be depended upon. We could even see our own nation destroyed; we could see our precious freedoms lost in this nation; we might witness nuclear attacks against our nation—but, no matter what the situation, we need to recognize that we live in the devil's world and that God changes not. God is our refuge and God is our strength, He our helper amid the flood.

There is great talk today of the loss of our natural resources, that we are destroying the planet, and that we are destroying all the species of the planet, including mankind. Bear in mind these verses, because there will come a time when our earth will wear out and God will create a new heavens and a new earth:

A New Heavens and New Earth	
Scripture	Reading
<b>Jer. 32:19</b>	Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.
<b>2Peter 3:10–13</b>	But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
<b>Heb. 1:10–12</b>	And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." (Psalm 102:25–27).
<b>Rev. 21:1</b>	Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

This does not mean that, it is our job as Christians, to pollute as much of the planet as we possibly can. Nothing is more wonderful than crisp, clean air, or water from a cold running stream of water. So there is nothing wrong with taking care of the environment that we live in. However, on the other hand, a believer should not be sucked into environmental movements, particularly when the purpose often appears to be, simply to raise taxes and to impose more regulations. Always bear in mind: [The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork](#) (Psalm 19:1).

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**Roar [and] rise up his waters,  
tremble mountains in his majesty.  
Selah!**

Psalm  
46:3

**His waters roar [and] rise up;  
mountains tremble before His majesty.  
[Musical] Pause [or, musical interlude; lit.,  
Selah!]**

**His waters roar and they rise up;  
mountains tremble before His majesty.  
[Musical interlude].**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Latin Vulgate	Their waters roared and were troubled: the mountains were troubled with His strength.
Masoretic Text	Roar [and] rise up his waters, tremble mountains in his majesty.
Peshitta	Though the waters thereof roar and are troubled, though the mountains shake with force thereof.
Septuagint	Their waters have roared and been troubled, the mountains have been troubled by his might. Pause.

Significant differences: The second verb in the Greek is not too different from the corresponding verb in the Hebrew. It can mean *to agitate*, *to make restless*. It is an interesting verb to apply to mountains, as it seems perfectly suited for the ocean.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	Let the ocean roar and foam, and its raging waves shake the mountains.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence.
<i>The Message</i>	Before the rush and roar of oceans, the tremors that shift mountains.
NET Bible®	...when its waves crash and foam, and the mountains shake before the surging sea. ( <i>Selah</i> )
New Living Testament	Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! <span style="float: right;"><i>Interlude</i></span>

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Bible in Basic English	Though its waters are sounding and troubled, and though the mountains are shaking with their violent motion. <i>Selah</i> .
Complete Apostles' Bible	Their waters have roared and been troubled, the mountains have been troubled by His might. Pause.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Water roars and foams, and mountains shake at the surging waves. <i>Selah</i>
HCSB	...though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with its turmoil. <i>Selah</i>
JPS (Tanakh)	...its waters rage and foam; in its swell mountains quake.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at his swelling <i>and</i> tumult. <i>Selah</i> [pause, and think calmly of that]!
LTHB	Let its waters foam; let the mountains shake in its swelling. <i>Selah</i> .
New King James Version	<i>Though</i> its waters roar <i>and</i> be troubled. <i>Though</i> the mountains shake with its swelling. <span style="float: right;"><i>Selah</i></span>
Updated Bible Version 2.11	Though its waters roar and are troubled, Though the mountains tremble with its swelling. <i>Selah</i> .
A Voice in the Wilderness	Let its waters roar and foam; let the mountains shake with the swelling of it. <i>Selah</i> .

**WEB** Though the waters of it roar and are troubled, Though the mountains tremble with their swelling. Selah.

*Young's Literal Translation* Roar--troubled are its waters, Mountains they shake in its pride. Selah.

**What is the gist of this verse?** This appears to be a continuation of examples of how the earth changes, but how we should maintain our faith in the strength and refuge of God.

Psalm 46:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâmâh (הָמָה) [pronounced haw-MAW]	to murmur, to growl, to roar, to be boisterous	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1993 BDB #242
châmar (חָמַר) [pronounced khaw-MAHR]	to ferment, to boil, to foam up; to rise up in a heap; to swell up; to cover or coat with mortar	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2560 BDB #330
We find a variety of meanings for this verb because it has so many diverse cognates. It only occurs 5 or 6 times in Scripture.			
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced MAH-yim]	water, waters	masculine plural noun with the masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4325 BDB #565

**Translation:** His waters roar [and] rise up;... Because *selah* occurs at the end of this verse, we know that v. 3 should be tied to what has come before. In v. 1, the psalmist trusts in God as his refuge and his strength, and in v. 2, the psalmist says he will not fear even if mountains crumble into the seas. He continues this same approach of trusting in God without fear, *even though* certain natural disasters or incredible forces of nature occur. This is why many translators include the word *though* at the beginning of this verse.

Barnes comments: *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled - The waters of the sea. The idea is, that they would not be afraid though everything should be in commotion, and be as unsettled as the restless waves of the ocean. The earth might be changed, the mountains removed, the agitated sea roar and dash against the shore, but their minds would be calm. The word rendered "be troubled" means to boil; to ferment; to foam; and here it refers to the ocean as agitated and lashed into foam. Nothing is more sublime and fearful than the ocean in a storm; nothing furnishes a better illustration of the peace produced by confidence in God amid the agitations which occur in the world, than the mind of a seaman that is calm when the ocean is heaved in wild commotion.*<sup>38</sup>

For most of us, water is a very pleasant thing to observe; who doesn't want the home along the river's edge, or overlooking a beautiful lake, or on a small cliff above the ocean. For many, that is a dream location. However, there are some who have lived along a river's edge who have seen their home and all of their possessions taken away in the space of an hour; there are those who were walking along the ocean's edge at the southern coast of Thailand, when the tsunami struck, causing untold devastation to everything near the beach. The water of rivers and oceans can be devastating to the n<sup>th</sup> degree, and, in many cases, we have little or no warning. I've lived in Houston for the past 25+ years, and we have seen our share of flooding. Rarely have I ever seen a weatherman say, "This is going to be the big one; this is going to be bad; if you live in these neighborhoods, you need to find higher ground." Much of the time that we are told to expect a heavy rain, we see rain, and it is not that big of a deal; and sometimes, it is devastating.

<sup>38</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:3.

In this verse, we are speaking of water in terms of its devastating force. The idea is, we can depend upon God in times of natural disaster; we can look to Him in a crisis. God does not forget about us, even when the waters roar and rise up.

We find this written as *His waters*; although Satan is the god of this world, God does maintain ownership and control over the waters, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix here refers to God. Some attribute the suffix to the seas from the previous verse.

Psalm 46:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ra'ash (רָאֵשׁ) [pronounced raw- GAHSH]	to quake, to tremble, to shake; to be moved [shaken]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7493 BDB #950
har (רֶהַר) [pronounced har]	mountains, hills	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ga'avah (גְּאוּבָה) [pronounced gah-uh- VAW]	majesty, magnificence; ornament, splendor; arrogance, pride; a swelling [rising] up [of the seas]	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1346 BDB #144

**Translation:** ...mountains tremble before His majesty. In the previous verse, we spoke of a mountain tumbling into the sea; here, we have mountains trembling *because of or by means of or before* His majesty. Again, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix refers to Jesus Christ. The trembling of the mountains refers to either a severe earthquake or to a volcanic eruption.

Barnes: *Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof - The rolling ocean breaking against; the sides of the mountains on its shore, and seeming to shake them to their foundation. The word rendered "swelling" means properly majesty, glory; then pride, haughtiness, insolence. Literally, "though the mountains tremble through their pride."*<sup>39</sup>

Again, it is interesting for the psalmist to speak of things like this, which he possibly never has observed personally. He has never seen movies of these sorts of phenomenon (this is because youtube had not yet been invented), yet the writer appears to be very aware of the power of these natural forces, which function at the permission or at the direction of a sovereign God.

Clarke sees this verse as more symbolic: *Waters, in prophetic language, signify people; and, generally, people in a state of political commotion, here signified by the term roar. And by these strong agitations of the people, the mountains – the secular rulers, shake with the swelling thereof – tremble, for fear that these popular tumults should terminate in the subversion of the state. This very people had seen all Asia in a state of war. The Persians had overturned Asia Minor, and destroyed the Babylonian empire: they had seen Babylon itself sacked and entered by the Persians; and Cyrus, its conqueror, had behaved to them as a father and deliverer. While their oppressors were destroyed,*

<sup>39</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:3.

themselves were preserved, and permitted to return to their own land.<sup>40</sup> The NET Bible® concurs: the repetition of the verbs (*hamah*, "crash; roar," Psalm 46:3) and (*mot*, "shake," Psalm 46:2) in Psalm 46:6, where nations/kingdoms "roar" and "shake," suggests that the language of Psalm 46:2–3 is symbolic and depicts the upheaval that characterizes relationships between the nations of the earth. As some nations (symbolized by the surging, chaotic waters) show hostility, others (symbolized by the mountains) come crashing down to destruction. The surging waters are symbolic of chaotic forces in other poetic texts (see, for example, Isa. 17:12—the roar of nations; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters; Jer. 51:41–42—How Babylon is taken, the praise of the whole earth seized! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations! The sea has come up on Babylon; she is covered with its tumultuous waves; and Rev. 17:15—And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.") and mountains can symbolize strong kingdoms (see, for example, Jer. 51:25—The LORD says, "Beware! I am opposed to you, Babylon! You are like a destructive mountain that destroys all the earth.").<sup>41</sup>

I find the literal rendering to be apt, yet I do not think that Clarke's approach is farfetched. And the gist of these 3 verses is, God is our refuge and strength during times of great crisis, which could include natural and political disasters. Natural and political disasters will be viewed side-by-side in v. 6. Symbolically, v. 3 might be seen to foreshadow v. 6. This is hinted at, as two verbs of v. 2–3 is also used in v. 6. In other words, there is no reason to try to confine this verse to natural or political disaster; finding a dual meaning in poetry is quite reasonable and not at all out of the ordinary. In fact, this may suggest that upcoming verses have dual meanings as well.

It is interesting that when Jesus speaks of the end times, his verbiage is strikingly similar: "There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and disease. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven...And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken." (Luke 21:21, 25–26). Again, the theme of this psalm is, in times of great upheaval of any sort, we need to depend upon God, Who will take care of us.

The NIV Study Bible nicely sums up these three verses: [vv. 1–3 are] a triumphant confession of fearless trust in God, though the continents break up and sink beneath the resurging waters of the seas—i.e., though the creation itself may seem to become uncreated (see Psalm 104:6–9 [The deep, like a garment, is His covering; the waters shall stand on the hills. At Your rebuke they shall flee; at the voice of Your thunder they shall be alarmed. They go up to the mountains, and down to the plains, to the place which You founded for them. You have set a boundary which they shall not pass, neither shall they turn again to cover the earth] Gen. 1:9–10 [And God said, Let the water which is under the heaven be collected into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so. And the water which was under the heaven was collected into its places, and the dry land appeared. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of the waters He called Seas; and God saw that it was good]) and all may appear to be going down before the onslaught of the primeval deep. The described upheaval is probably imagery for great threats to Israel's existence, especially from her enemies.<sup>42</sup>

There is a refrain found in vv 7 and 11 [Jehovah of the Armis is with us; the God of Jacob is a refuge for us], which is followed by *selah!* Rotherham suggests that this refrain was accidentally dropped from the text here.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:3.

<sup>41</sup> *The Net Bible®*; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:3 (edited and the text of the verses cited was added).

<sup>42</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 825 (footnote). Slightly edited.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 552 (footnote).



## Psalm 46:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çelâh (חַלָּה) [pronounced seh-LAW]	<i>to lift up, to elevate, to exalt [with one's voice], to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; it is transliterated Selah</i>	interjection	Strong's #5542 BDB #699

The verbal cognate is 'âlâh (אָלָה) [pronounced saw-LAW], which means *to lift up and toss aside*. In the Piel stem, it means *to weigh*, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of çelâh as *rest, silence, pause*, as çelâh does not necessarily have to match the meaning of its cognates. My thinking, which is a combination of BDB and Gesenius, is that the voices build up to a crescendo here, and, very likely, they are then followed by a vocal (but not necessarily, musical) silence. This would reconcile the points made by Gesenius and still make this compatible with its cognates.<sup>44</sup> Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments *are lifted up* for a musical interlude. The NLT translation of *Interlude* is very good.

**Translation:** **[Musical] Pause** [or, musical interlude; lit., *Selah!*] As described in the exegesis, this word çelâh comes from a verb which means *to lift up*. It is reasonable to assume that those who are playing musical instruments are to lift up these instruments and play during a pause in the singing. I believe that this is called the *bridge* in modern music? Keil and Delitzsch suggest: *The music, as Sela directs, here becomes more boisterous; it gives intensity to the strong cry for the judgment of God; and the first unfolding of thought of this Michtam is here brought to a close.*<sup>45</sup> Let me suggest that this also is a time where David takes a break from writing, and concentrates on his run. Obviously, he is formulating this as he runs; he does not stop to scratch out a few verses on a rock or a tree; but this represents a break in his thinking, and the music intensifies as he simply runs.

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### God is Greater than the Disturbances of Nations

Just as, in the previous verse, it seemed quite reasonable for it to have a dual meaning, this should be kept in mind as we examine the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this psalm.

**A river His canals make happy a city of Elohim** Psalm  
**holy dwelling places of [the] Most High.** 46:4

**A river—His canals—make happy the city of Elohim;**  
**[and they make happy] the holy dwelling places of the Most High.**

**The river and His canals may the city of God joyful**  
**and they make the residences of the holy Most High joyful as well.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

**A river His canals make happy a city of Elohim**  
**holy dwelling places of [the] Most High.**

<sup>44</sup> For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

<sup>45</sup> Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 5, p. 404.

Septuagint                    The flowings of the river gladden the city of God: the Most High has sanctified his tabernacle.

Significant differences:      In the Greek and Latin, we have the verb *to sanctify* in the second line. The Syriac and Hebrew do not. There are a number of places in this psalm, where differences in text are found in the Greek and Latin, but not in the Syriac.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV                              A river and its streams bring joy to the city, which is the sacred home of God Most High.

Good News Bible (TEV)      There is a river that brings joy to the city of God, to the sacred house of the Most High.

*The Message*  
NET Bible®                    River fountains splash joy, cooling God's city, this sacred haunt of the Most High. The river's channels bring joy to the city of God, the special, holy dwelling place of the sovereign One.

New Jerusalem Bible      There is a river whose streams bring joy to God's city, it sanctifies the dwelling of the Most High.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English      There is a river whose streams make glad the resting-place of God, the holy place of the tents of the Most High.

Complete Apostles' Bible    The flowings of the river gladden the city of God; the Most High has sanctified His tabernacle.

*God's Word*™                There is a river whose streams bring joy to the city of God, the holy place where the Most High lives.

HCSB                            *There is a river--its streams delight the city of God, the holy dwelling place of the Most High.*

*The Scriptures* 1998      A river whose streams Make glad the city of Elohim, The set-apart dwelling of the Most High.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

English Standard Version    There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

A Voice in the Wilderness    There is a river whose streams cause rejoicing in the city of God, the consecrated place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

WEB                             There is a river, the streams of which make the city of God glad, The holy place of the tents of the Most High.

Young's Updated LT          A river—its rivulets rejoice the city of God, Your holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Water causes rejoicing in the city of God, a holy place of dwelling places for God.

### Psalm 46:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâhâr (נָהַר) [pronounced naw-HAWR]	<i>stream, river</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5104 BDB #625

## Psalm 46:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
peleg (פֶּלֶג) [pronounced PĒH-lehg]	a [manmade] channel, a canal; a river, a stream; a cleft, a division	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6388 BDB #811
sâmach (סָמַח) [pronounced saw-MAHKH]	to make joyful, to cause one to rejoice, to gladden, to make one happy	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #8055 BDB #970
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer]	encampment, city, town	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods or God; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** *A river—His canals—make happy the city of Elohim;...* These same waters, which are so destructive and cause so much fear, are used to provide all necessities for the city of God. I am going to assume that the city of God is a reference to Jerusalem, which is seen as the city of God during the time of David (and during the reigns of his sons), and it will be the holy city again in the Millennium (Rev. 21:2, 10). At the same time, bear in mind that this might be a narrow interpretation, and that this can simply refer to the earth, which God had designed for habitation.

Most cities in the ancient world were built near water; water then, as today, was necessary for almost every function of life. It was well-understood to be our lifeblood. Without some source of water, man cannot survive. Canals are probably manmade irrigation ditches used for crops or simply to move water closer into the city.

Interestingly enough, Jerusalem was not built on a river, unlike Thebes (Neh. 3:8), Damascus (2Kings 5:12), Nineveh (Nahum 2:6, 8) or Babylon (Psalm 137:1). We don't know exactly how Jerusalem was watered during the time of David. Solomon built great pools for Jerusalem in the Bethlehem area; and Hezekiah had deep tunnels built in order to reach an underground spring (2Kings 18:17 Isa. 22:11).<sup>46</sup> It is suggested that David attacked Jerusalem through underground tunnels, which, no doubt, were routes to an underground water supply.<sup>47</sup>

For this reason, even though most would agree that Jerusalem is the *City of God* spoken of here, the river may be seen as symbolic. In Psalm 1, the blessed man is planted by the rivers of water, which is the Word of God. We read in Ezekiel of a river which flows out from the house of God (Ezek. 47). Finally, in Rev. 22:1–2, we read: *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on both sides of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, each yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.* In these examples, a river represents much more than simply water; it represents the Word of God, by which our spiritual lives are sustained, just as clean, clear water sustains our physical beings.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> There is actually an inscription taken from the walls of the tunnels dug by Hezekiah, when the two sets of miners met, tunneling from opposite directions. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*; Ralph Gower; ©1987 by Moody International; © by Moody Press; p. 80.

<sup>47</sup> This was possibly through Warren's Shaft, which remains in Jerusalem to this day, insofar as I know. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*; Ralph Gower; ©1987 by Moody International; © by Moody Press; p. 207.

<sup>48</sup> Up until the quote of Revelation, this is mostly a paraphrase of McGee's comments in J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 42–89*, ©1991 by J. Vernon McGee; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; p. 33.

As I have already mentioned, there is a contrast here between waters as a destructive force and water as our lifeblood. We find a similar contrast in Isa. 8:6–8, where the armies of Assyria will sweep into Judah as water overruns the banks of a river; this is because the gentle waters of the Lord have been rejected by His people.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we enjoy the river and canals of God, and we sometimes face the flood waters as well. However, it is the same God, and we are provided for no matter what it is that we face. We are going to find ourselves facing small disasters and major disasters. Sometimes we fail or get D–'s when we face these disasters, but we can be assured that God is going to take us through to the other side. The end result is going to be to our good.

In the beginning of this psalm, water referred to the great destructive force of water, something which the psalmist had possibly not even seen first hand (the only thing that I can recall in Scripture is God using great storms to neutralize or to kill Israel’s enemies). Here, water is presented as being necessary to the happiness of the city of God.

<b>How Do We Interpret the Word <i>River</i>; or <i>Canals</i>?</b>	
<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Incident</b>
<b>Barnes</b>	<i>Barnes gives two interpretations to this: The allusion here is undoubtedly to the canals, watercourses, or rivulets that were led off from the main stream for the purpose of supplying fountains and watering gardens.... So here, the flowing river of divine mercy and goodness is conveyed, as in smaller canals or streams, to each home and heart, producing peace, calmness, joy - while the world around is full of commotion and trouble.</i> <sup>49</sup>
<b>Clarke</b>	<i>The Chaldee understands the river, and its streams or divisions, as pointing out various peoples who should be converted to the faith and thus make glad the city of God, Jerusalem by their flowing together to the worship of the true God.</i>  <i>But the river may refer to the vast Medo-Persian army and its divisions: those branches which took Babylon; and, instead of ruining and destroying the poor Jews, preserved them alive, and gave them their liberty; and thus the city of God, and the tabernacle of the Most High, were gladdened.</i> <sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:3.

<sup>50</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:3.

How Do We Interpret the Word <i>River</i> ; or <i>Canals</i> ?	
Scripture	Incident
<b>Gill</b>	<p><i>The allusion is either to the river Kidron, which ran by Jerusalem; or to the waters of Shiloah, which by different courses and branches, ran through the city of Jerusalem, and supplied the several parts of it with water, to the joy and comfort of its inhabitants: but the words are to be understood in a figurative sense, as applicable to Gospel times; and this river either designs the Gospel, the streams of which are its doctrines, which are living waters that went out from Jerusalem, and which publish glad tidings of great joy to all sensible sinners; or the Spirit and his graces, which are compared to a well, and rivers of living water, in the exercise of which the saints have much joy and peace; or else the Lord himself, who is a place of broad rivers and streams to his people, and is both their refreshment and protection; or rather his everlasting love to them is here intended (Psalm 36:8—<a href="#">They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights</a>); The head of this river is the heart of God, his sovereign goodwill and pleasure; the channel through which it runs is Christ Jesus; the rise of it was in eternity, when, like a river that runs underground, it flowed secretly, as it does before the effectual calling; when it breaks up, and appears in large streams, and flows, and so it proceeds running on to all eternity. It is a river that is unfathomable, and cannot be passed over; it has heights and depths, and lengths and breadths, which cannot be fully comprehended: as for the quality of it, it is a pure river, clear as crystal; free of all dissimulation in the heart of God, and clear of all motives and conditions in the creature. Its water is living water; which quickens dead sinners, revives drooping saints, secures from the second death, and gives eternal life; it makes all fruitful about it, or that are planted by it...the "streams" of this river are eternal election; the covenant of grace its blessings and promises; the provision and mission of Christ as a Saviour, and redemption by him; justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, perseverance in grace, and eternal life; called "streams", because they flow from the fountain of divine love; and because of the rapidity, force, and power of the grace of God, in the application of them in conversion, which carries all before it; and because of the abundance, continuance, and freeness of them, and the gratefulness and acceptableness of them to those who see the worth of them, and their interest in them (SOS 4:12, 15—<a href="#">A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a spring locked, a fountain sealed...a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon</a>); and these, when made known and applied, "make glad" the hearts of God's people.<sup>51</sup></i></p>
<b>Kukis</b>	<p>First of all, the idea is, there is a contrast between this and waters in previous verses; in previous verses, water is seen as destructive; here, it is presented as the lifeblood of a city.</p> <p>Perhaps the idea being convey is, what God can use by way of destruction is also used by Him for blessing. We could take this one step further and recognize that all that He does is for our blessing, including the great natural disasters that we are exposed to in the previous 3 verses.</p>
<b>McGee</b>	<p>The river spoken of here is the Word of God, which refreshes and sustains the believer in times of great trouble.<sup>52</sup></p>

<sup>51</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:3.

<sup>52</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Chapters 42–89*, ©1991 by J. Vernon McGee; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; p. 33.



How Do We Interpret the Word <i>River</i> ; or <i>Canals</i> ?	
Scripture	Incident
NET Bible®	<i>Some see here an adaptation of Canaanite (or, more specifically, Jebusite) mythical traditions of rivers/springs flowing from the high god El's dwelling place. The Songs of Zion do utilize such imagery at times (see Psalm 48:1–2—Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King).</i> <sup>53</sup>
NIV Study Bible	<i>Jerusalem had no river...here the “river” of Psalm 36:8 serves as a metaphor for the continual outpouring of the sustaining and refreshing blessings of God, which make the city of God like the Garden of Eden (see Gen. 2:10 Isa. 33:21 51:3; compare also Ezek. 31:4–9).</i> <sup>54</sup>
The Open Bible	<i>The river symbolizes the constant flow of the gracious blessings of God to His people.</i> <sup>55</sup>

I cannot discount the gist of the other interpretations, that water is symbolic of God's blessings and our logistical grace. God's grace is often denoted by water:

Psalm 23:2: *He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.*

Psalm 36:8–9: *They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.*

Zech. 14:8: *On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.*

Rev. 22:1–2: *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

There are a number of other pertinent verse here; among them: Psalm 36:8–9 Isa. 8:6–7 48:18 Ezek. 47:1–12.

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Barnes has a take on this verse: *There is no allusion here to any particular stream or river, but the image is designed to represent a state of peace and calm security in contrast with the rough and troubled ocean. While the ocean rages, and foams, and dashes against the mountains as if it would overturn them, the state of Jerusalem, the city of God, was well represented by a calm and gently-flowing river; a river of full banks, diffusing joy and fertility and beauty wherever it flowed. This image, to represent happiness, abundance, peace, joy, is one that is often employed in the Scriptures. Compare Isa. 32:2 33:21 41:18 Psalm 1:3 36:8 Rev. 22:1. The “idea” here is simply that Jerusalem would be calm and serene amidst all the external agitations in the world – calm as a gently-flowing stream. The streams – the canals – the water-courses of such a river flowing around each dwelling and along each garden, would diffuse happiness and beauty everywhere.*

The NET Bible® comments: *The image of a river flowing through Zion may have inspired prophetic visions of an eschatological river flowing from the temple (see Ezek 47:1-12; Joel 3:18—“And in that*

<sup>53</sup> *The Net Bible®*; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:4 (footnote; and the footnote was slightly edited).

<sup>54</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 825 (footnote).

<sup>55</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 748 (footnote).

*day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Shittim”).<sup>56</sup>*

Spurgeon: *“There is a river.” Divine grace like a smoothly flowing, fertilizing, full, and never-failing river, yields refreshment and consolation to believers. This is the river of the water of life, of which we all partake. It is no boisterous ocean, but a placid stream, it is not stayed in its course by earthquakes or crumbling mountains, it follows its serene course without disturbance. Happy are they who know from their own experience that there is such a river of God. “The streams whereof” in their various influences, for they are many, “shall make glad the city of God,” by assuring the citizens that Zion's Lord will unfailingly supply all their needs. The streams are not transient like Cherith, nor muddy like the Nile, nor furious like Kishon, nor treacherous like Job's deceitful brooks, neither are their waters “naught” like those of Jericho, they are clear, cool, fresh, abundant, and gladdening. The great fear of an Eastern city in time of war was lest the water supply should be cut off during a siege; if that were secured the city could hold out against attacks for an indefinite period. In this verse, Jerusalem is described as well supplied with water, to set forth the fact, that in seasons of trial all-sufficient grace will be given to enable us to endure unto the end. The church is like a well-ordered city, surrounded with mighty walls of truth and justice, garrisoned by omnipotence, fairly built and adorned by infinite wisdom: its burgesses the saints enjoy high privileges; they trade with far-off lands, they live in the smile of the King; and as a great river is the very making and mainstay of a town, so is the broad river of everlasting love and grace their joy and bliss.<sup>57</sup>*

The idea of this and previous verses is, water, in any form—as a storm, as part of a tornado, as found in the ocean or in a river—can be extremely powerful and destructive; however, the exact same water provides all that is needed for the preservation and the happiness of any city.

If you have just studied Psalm 24, it is amazing how integral water is to life, and how well David understood this when writing Psalm 24. The same is true here; it is absolutely integral to life.

Here, what I find interesting is, that the psalmist recognizes just how powerful and destructive water can be, where we have no recorded historical incidents to which we can reference which would indicate that people in Israel faces this kind of force before (apart from storms being used against their enemies in battle).

We have a reference here also to the *city of God*, which we may reasonably interpret as being Jerusalem, much as we find it in Psalm 3:4 *I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill*; in Psalm 20:1: *May he send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion*; and in Psalm 48:1–2a: *Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion*. See also: Psalm 48:8 87:3 2Chron. 6:6 Isa. 37:35–36 60:14 Heb. 12:22 Rev. 21:2–3, 10. This is seen as God's place of rule during the Age of Israel and He will rule over the earth from there in the Millennium as well. God is also seen as dwelling in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven in Psalm 2:4: *He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision* (actually, God the Father is seen as dwelling in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven and God the Son, the King, is seen as dwelling in Zion—Psalm 2:6–7).

There is no doubt some difficulty with assigning a particular place to God, Who is Omnipresent. God is everywhere and God sees everything including our very thoughts. However, God created man and the angels with free will; therefore, at times, we function outside God's directive will, and the angels which fell are always outside God's will. To that extent, God does not function within the demons or where the demons are. So, His throne is seen to be elsewhere. Even in reference to man—even regenerate man—God's throne is often represented as being in heaven, as His will is not being done on earth (as it is in heaven). God can take the negative volition toward Him and turn that into good (Rom. 8:28), but all that occurs on this earth is, taken apart from everything else, is not good. We live in the devil's world, and therefore, God's throne is spoken of as being

<sup>56</sup> *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:4 (footnote; text of passage added).

<sup>57</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 46:4 (edited).

elsewhere. However, God functions within us and, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, God functions through us and He is said to reside within us.

As an aside, there is no *there is* in this verse; so, *there is a river* is not an accurate rendering. However, this short phrase, like many found in Scripture, was chosen for the title of a book about Edgar Cayce, who is called the sleeping prophet. Personally, I was raised to believe in reincarnation, and much of that is based upon the trance-readings of Cayce. I have quite frankly forgotten the details here, but one of the many things which I was taught, along with reincarnation, is that religious types took all references to reincarnation out of the Bible. This is something which I even heard again on the radio the other day on a late-night show. When it comes to the Old Testament, it was preserved by a number of groups: there are the Masorite Jews who preserved the Hebrew text, and apparently added the vowel points; there are Christians who preserved the Greek text; the Catholic church preserved the Latin text; and there are several other groups who preserved the text of the Old Testament in Syriac, Arabic, and other languages. What is amazing to me is, how close these texts are to one another, even though the groups which preserved the texts were often theologically opposed to one another. However, their faith in the text itself is so strong that, it is doubtful that any text was dramatically changed (we have come across two instances of what could be seen as a serious problem in the text; we have come across many incidents of minor disagreements, none of which affect any doctrines whatsoever). The New Testament is a whole different story. Although it is preserved by several groups, and found in several languages, there is an unprecedented number of manuscripts: 26,000 full and partial ancient manuscripts, something which is unparalleled in human history. There are a huge number of manuscripts which predate the Catholic Church, whom many think made many and drastic changes to the text in order to suit Catholic doctrine. As we have seen, the Latin text and Hebrew text are very similar, and are in agreement 95% of the time; and the disagreements are few and unsubstantial. My point is, although there are a few changes which have been made to the text of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments; we can pinpoint those changes, and, in many cases, we are able to determine the more accurate text. And one thing which is clear is, the idea of reincarnation is not and has never been a part of Scripture; we do not find any references to reincarnation in any text or alternate text. What we have here is—something which has become famous in this culture—made-up history. Without any shred of evidence whatsoever, people make up things in order to support whatever weird ideas that they have.

It is very telling for reincarnation types to say things like this about the Bible. Why can't they simply say, "I believe in reincarnation; I think that I should get better and better with each incarnation." Why do they need to say, "Well, the Bible used to say thus and so, but that was changed by religious types over the years." They need to say this because, even in their own darkness, they have to acknowledge the importance of God's Word. They need some kind of authority for their weird ideas, and they simply make up false history about the Bible in order to pretend that the Bible supports their ideas. There are all kinds of religious texts out there, and some which even support, to some degree, their philosophies; but that is not good enough: in their minds, some evil organization had to come along, find all mentions of reincarnation in the Bible, and surreptitiously take them out—this is despite the fact that this is one of the most well-known books throughout history and millions of people have committed great sections of the Bible to memory—they still think somehow, some way, some organization snuck in, took out these references, and no one noticed, and only the changed manuscripts were somehow preserved.

This is obvious even today. We have people in universities and on television proclaiming that George W. Bush worked out a deal with Osama Bin Laden to destroy the twin towers in New York City, so that Bush could, as far as I can tell, get the people of the US riled up enough so that they would approve him attacking Middle Eastern countries, and cause Bin Laden to flee into obscurity. Yes, that makes so much sense. But so many people think, *well, that is their opinion and everyone has a right to their opinion*. You don't get to have an opinion about what did or did not historically occur! You might be able to have differing opinions concerning the interpretation of events, but you do not simply get to make up events in order to *prove* your own weird philosophies.

Among Muslims today, there are huge segments who doubt the holocaust, who doubt the severity of it; and yet, in the same breath, call for the complete annihilation of Israel. It does not matter that we have films of it; we have eyewitnesses of it who are still alive; it does not matter that we have thousands upon thousands of people who have testified in writing and on camera as to the incredible horror of the holocaust, but at the same time, there are possibly millions of Muslims who ignore every historical evidence, make up facts, and teach these made-up facts

to their children. I remember the first time that I heard of the concept of a holocaust museum, and that seemed strange to me, a place to preserve evidence of this horror, so that man could not forget. I thought to myself, how could man ever forget something like this? And yet, here it is, not but 60–70 years later, and millions of people deny that the holocaust even occurred, despite the preponderance of evidence to the contrary.

I have heard that in England, they have, at least in some schools, removed teaching the holocaust from their historical curriculum, because it may offend Muslims or it may cause too much discussion in the classroom and too many disagreements.<sup>58</sup> This is because, **man loves darkness rather than light**; he prefers that which is false over that which is true.

### Psalm 46:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qâdôwsh (שׁוֹדֵשׁ) [pronounced kaw-DOWSE]	<i>sacred, holy, set apart, sacrosanct</i>	masculine singular adjective construct	Strong's #6918 BDB #872
mîsh <sup>e</sup> kân (מִשְׁכָּן) [pronounced mish <sup>e</sup> -KAWN]	<i>residence, dwelling place, tabernacle, portable sanctuary, tent, abode; semi-permanent structure, semi-permanent tent, temporary dwelling place</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4908 BDB #1015

This is the word translated tabernacle throughout the end of Exodus. This is the word used more often for the *tabernacle* of God, as well as for *temporary dwelling place* (2Chron. 29:6 Job 18:21 Jer. 9:19), as found in Ex. 26, 36, 40 Num. 1, 3, 9 (yet, interestingly enough, rarely in Leviticus). the two words occur together in Ex. 40:2 Num. 3:25. The latter word seems to be more of a permanent structure, yet still based on the concept of a tent. It is less than a house, but more than a tent. *Semi-permanent structure, semi-permanent tent, temporary dwelling place* all give a sense as to the meaning of mîsh<sup>e</sup>kân. It is a tent, nonetheless and can be taken up and pitched again (Num. 1:51). This appears to be a semi-permanent structure, like our modern day trailer home in function. You will note that Keil and Delitzsch render this *pavilion*. This threw me for a bit, so I looked it up. The first definition, *a light, usually open building used for shelter, concerts, exhibits, etc.* is what I thought of. However, one of the secondary meanings of this word is *a large and elaborate tent*. This is how we should understand this word. Keil and Delitzsch add: *Even in the present day, a Beduin, as he approaches an encampment, knows the tent of the sheikh immediately; it is denoted by its size, often also by the lances planted at the door, and also, as is easily imagined, by the rich arrangement of cushions and carpets.*<sup>59</sup>

e <sup>l</sup> yôwn (עֹלָיוֹן) [pronounced é <sup>l</sup> -YOHN]	<i>Most High, highest, Supreme</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5945 BDB #751
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**Translation:**...[and they make happy] the holy dwelling places of the Most High. I don't claim to fully apprehend the meaning of this phrase. Is this a reference to God being omnipresent? It is unusual to use this word *Tabernacle* in the plural, as there was to be one Tabernacle only during the history of Israel. Perhaps this refers to the Tabernacle and to the Temple, the Temple having been build prior to this psalm being written. It is even possible that God the Holy Spirit was looking forward to the Church Age when we would all be indwelt by the Trinity. I am concerned about prophecies in the Old Testament which refer to fulfillments in the Church Age; however, it is possible that the saints of the Tribulation will be indwelt by the Trinity as we are. During the time of David, it is unclear whether the Tabernacle was functioning; after his reign, Solomon built the Temple, which made the Tabernacle obsolete, so to speak (it was kept within the Temple, if memory serves).

<sup>58</sup> For instance <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6517359.stm> or another excellent link with outstanding comments is <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/education/article1600686.ece>

<sup>59</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 470.

Since this is a difficult passages, because we are speaking of the dwelling places of the Most High, we should see the opinions of others:

Why is God Said to Live in Dwelling Places?	
Scripture	Incident
<b>Barnes</b>	Barnes suggests that this was written after the Temple was built, and that the plural refers to the different parts of the Temple. <i>The tabernacle and the temple were alike divided into two parts - the holy and the most holy place - and hence the "plural" term is sometimes applied to them.</i> <sup>60</sup>
<b>Gill</b>	This refers to separate dwelling places for God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. <sup>61</sup>
<b>Keil and Delitzsch</b>	They seem to suggest that this is the plural of excellence, and rather than understand this as <i>dwelling</i> s we should understand this as a <i>glorious dwelling</i> . <sup>62</sup> They suggest the Scriptures Psalm 43:3 84:2 132:5, 7
<b>Kukis</b>	I learn toward two interpretations: this refers to the Tabernacle of a previous time and to the Temple of the time that this psalm was written. This could refer as well to the Tribulational saints who will be indwelt by the Trinity as are we in the Church Age. This does bring up a rather undefined area: we know what spirituality is for us in the Church Age and we know what it was for the people in the Age of Israel. We are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, and they were not. We have the filling of the Holy Spirit and they did not. However, there is no reason to assume that the saints of the Tribulation will have less than we have now.
<b>The NET Bible®</b>	This is the plural of degree, which emphasizes the special character of a place. <sup>63</sup>

Although, of course, I believe I am correct here; it is possible that the psalmist is using the plural of degree or excellence here.

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Perhaps, even though Israel saw the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, as sort of a dwelling place for God—at least, a place where man met God—that this psalmist understood that God could be found throughout the universe.

As has been suggested in previous verses, we may be looking at a meaning which is below the surface; that is, we may not be speaking of Jerusalem specifically in the first half of this verse, nor are we necessarily speaking of the specific Tabernacle of God in the second half. One possible interpretation is, it is the entire earth which is made glad by the streams of water; and that these dwelling places of the Most High can refer to any home inhabited by believers; or to any place on this earth, as God is omnipresent.

We find the designation for God as the Most High in 54 verses, in both the Old and New Testaments. We first find this name in Gen. 14:18: [And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. \(He was priest of God Most High\)](#). This title is prevalent in the Psalms (21 times); in the book of Daniel (13 times); and in the book of Luke (7 times). It is interesting that the final use of this name for God occurs in Heb. 7:1–2, where Melchizedek

<sup>60</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:4.

<sup>61</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:4.

<sup>62</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 46:4–7.

<sup>63</sup> *The Net Bible®*; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:4.



is mentioned once again: For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. Jesus Christ, the first and the last.

**Elohim in a midst of her lest she is shaken helps her Elohim to turn toward [away from] a morning.**

Psalm  
46:5

**Elohim is in her [the city's; the earth's] midst, so that she is not dislodged; Elohim helps her [the city; the earth] turn toward the morning.**

**God is in the midst of the city [or, earth], so that the city [or, earth] is not shaken; God helps the city [or, earth] turn toward each morning.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved: God will help it in the morning early.
Masoretic Text	Elohim in a midst of her lest she is shaken helps her Elohim to turn toward [away from] a morning.
Peshitta	God is in the midst of her; she will not be moved; God will help her in the early morning.
Septuagint	God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her with His countenance. [or, as per the Alexandrian LXX and Hebrew, before, or, toward the morning]..

Significant differences: The verb *to turn toward* and the noun for *faces* are cognates of one another in the Hebrew. Therefore, it is easy to see where the Greek translators got their rendering. It is possible that what was in the Hebrew confused them, and they tried to *fix* this. You will note that the Jerome and those who translated the Syriac were also confused by the Hebrew text, and simply said that God would help *her* (the earth). With what we know today, this makes perfect sense.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	God is in that city, and it won't be shaken. He will help it at dawn.
Good News Bible (TEV)	God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed; at early dawn he will come to its aid.
<i>The Message</i>	God lives here, the streets are safe, God at your service from crack of dawn.
NET Bible®	God lives within it, it cannot be moved. God rescues it at the break of dawn.
New American Bible	God is in its midst; it shall not be shaken; God will help it at break of day.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	God has taken his place in her; she will not be moved: he will come to her help at the dawn of morning.
Complete Apostles' Bible	God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her with His countenance.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	God is in that city. It cannot fall. God will help it at the break of dawn.
HCSB	God is within her; she will not be toppled. God will help her when the morning dawns.

JPS (Tanakh) God is in its midst, it will not be toppled,  
by daybreak God will come to its aid.

New International Version God is within her, she will not fall,  
God will help her at break of day [or, as dawn approaches].

The Scriptures 1998 Elohim is in her midst, she does not topple; Elohim does help her when morning  
turns.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

English Standard Version God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning  
dawns.

Updated Bible Version 2.11 God is in the midst of her; she will not be moved: God will help her, and that right  
early.

Young’s Updated LT God is in her midst—she is not moved, God does help her at the turn of the  
morning!

**What is the gist of this verse?** God is in the earth’s midst, so that the earth is not dislodged from its orbit; God  
turns the earth toward each morning. God is in the city’s midst, so that it remains, able to view each morning.

The Hebrew text here is pretty amazing; by one interpretation, it sounds like a layman’s expression of to the earth’s  
gravity, it’s stability and its orbit, all of which are attributed to God.

Psalm 46:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods or God; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural noun	Strong’s #430 BDB #43
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	Strong’s #none BDB #88
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced KEH-re <sup>b</sup> v]	midst, inward part	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong’s #7130 BDB #899

With the bēyth preposition, it means *in the midst of, among, into the midst of* (after a verb of motion).

**Translation:** Elohim is in her [the city; the earth’s] midst,... The feminine singular suffix again refers back to the  
earth (v. 2) and it can also refer back to the city [of God] (v. 4). I think that the intention of this is a double  
meaning, one which God the Holy Spirit inserted for the last few generations. It makes sense to us now; it would  
not have made sense at the time it was written.

The first interpretation has God in the midst of the city of God, which clearly makes sense. This does not mean  
that God’s omnipresence is changed, simply that God has some sort of a special presence within the city of God,  
which is Jerusalem. This would be another verse that would appear to identify this psalm with the moving of the  
Ark into Jerusalem. However, as has been previously discussed, this psalm more logically should be placed with  
an event like the sudden destruction of Sennacherib’s army (Isa. 36–37).

Barnes writes: *God is in the midst of the “city” referred to above - the “city of God.” That is, (a) he  
dwelt there by the visible symbol of his presence, the shekinah; (b) he was there “actually” as a help*

and a protector. It was his chosen abode, and as long as such a Being dwelt in the city, they had nothing to fear.<sup>64</sup>

That God is in the midst of His city, or in the midst of His people, is found in a number of passages: Deut. 23:14 Psalm 68:18 Isa. 12:6 Ezek. 43:7, 9 Hosea 11:9 Joel 2:27 Zeph. 3:15 Zech. 2:5, 10–11 8:3 Matt. 18:20 Rev. 2:1.

The second interpretation is quite fascinating; the idea that God is within the earth (the other prominent feminine singular noun in this psalm). Again, this is not necessarily a reference to God's omnipresence, or even to a specialized presence, in this case. God simply set up the laws of universe. *God is in the midst of the earth.* God set up all physical laws, including the law of gravity, the law of centrifugal force, and whatever other laws allow the earth to fly through space at astonishing speeds, turn on an axis, and for us to feel in complete stability. This is quite interesting, particularly in view of the words which follow.

Psalm 46:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bal (לַבַּל) [pronounced <i>bahf</i> ]	<i>nothing, not, not yet, scarcely; lest [when followed by a future]; so that...not</i>	adverb	Strong's #1077 BDB #115
môwt (מִוֹט) [pronounced <i>mohf</i> ]	<i>to be shaken, to totter, to be moved, to dislodge, to throw into disorder or disarray</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4131 BDB #556

**Translation:** *...so that she is not dislodged;...* The dual interpretation begins like this: if this refers to Jerusalem, then the indication is, God would preserve this city, that is not be moved. Jerusalem still exists, although, at various times, it has been thrown into disorder and into disarray.

Now, even more interesting, is understanding this as a reference to the earth: *God is within the earth, so that the earth is not shaken, so that it does not totter, so that it is not dislodged from her orbit.* God also keeps the earth from being thrown into disarray. The Bible is not a scientific book, and therefore, it is not going to be written with scientific rigor; the Bible will report certain scientific facts, but from a layman's perspective (which is not too different from us saying, *the sun rises in the east and sets in the west*). The earth spins on its axis, and it is also going around the sun in a specific elliptical orbit. God maintains this spin and this orbit for the earth, so that it is not dislodged. For the earth to somehow be thrown out of its orbit would throw the world into disorder and disarray.

Psalm 46:5c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâzar (אָזַר) [pronounced <i>gaw-ZAHR</i> ]	<i>to help, to aid</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5826 BDB #740
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

<sup>64</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:5.

**Translation:** ...Elohim helps her [the city; the earth]... First interpretation: God helps Jerusalem; God will preserve Jerusalem for many years, including the times that the Jews occupy this city. Jerusalem is still preserved to this very day. We may think that it is unfortunate that Jerusalem became some kind of an Islamic city, and therefore, a city for which the Arabs will always struggle. Let me disabuse you of your notions: radical Islam is fueled by hatred; hatred for the Jews and hatred for Christianity, despite the fact that we all recognize all or portions of the Old Testament as divinely inspired. Radical Muslims will always hate the Jews, no matter where they live. **The son of the bond woman always persecutes the son of the free woman** (Gal. 4:29). The fact that they occupy a postage stamp piece of land in the Middle East simply gives them an excuse for their outrage. However, the fact that Jerusalem is a holy city to the Muslims keeps them from destroying it completely. Certain Muslims would like nothing better than to see Jerusalem leveled (along with its Jewish population)—except that, it is a holy city to them. Many radical Muslims could care less whether hundreds of thousands of Palestinians die in the process, just so the Jews die as well—except, that Jerusalem is a holy city to the Muslims. So God, in this way, has preserved Jerusalem for all this time.

More specifically, if this took place during the siege of Sennacherib, God will help and protect Israel in that siege. This expresses the confidence of the mature believers during that desperate time.

The second interpretation will be tied to the next phrase below, so I will cover it there.

Psalm 46:5d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânâh (פָּנָה) [pronounced paw-NAWH]	<i>to turn, to turn away from, to turn toward, to turn one's face away from, to turn one's face to</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6437 BDB #815
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced BOH-ker]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1242 BDB #133

**Translation:** ...turn toward the morning. Under the first interpretation, God helps Jerusalem, so that it sees morning after morning. It turns toward the morning. Barnes suggests that, when the people of Judah awoke the next morning, all of the Assyrians were dead corpses (Isa. 37:36), and that this is the idea of the latter half of this verse. The NIV Study Bible suggests that attacks against a city were typically launched at dawn.<sup>65</sup>

Under the second interpretation of this passage, God helps the earth to turn toward each morning. At the beginning of this verse, God is within the earth so that it is not dislodged from its orbit or from its spin; and here, God helps the earth to turn toward the morning. God setting the earth into an orbit and setting up the earth to turn on its axis as well, is how God turns the earth, so to speak, toward each and every morning.

It might be worthwhile to separate this into two psalms, and see how both interpretations pan out from here to the end. The primary difference between the two sides is, I replace the feminine singular suffixes and verb forms with either the feminine singular noun *earth* or *city*.

Two Interpretations of Psalm 46	
God is in the Midst of the Earth	God is in the Midst of the City
Gentiles Might be in Disarray, but Believers are not Shaken	

<sup>65</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 825 (footnote).

## Two Interpretations of Psalm 46

God is in the Midst of the Earth	God is in the Midst of the City
A river—His canals—make happy the city of Elohim; [and they make happy] the holy dwelling places of the Most High.	A river—His canals—make happy the city of Elohim; [and they make happy] the holy dwelling places of the Most High.
Elohim is in the midst of the earth, so that she is not dislodged [from her orbit]; Elohim helps the earth to turn toward the morning.	Elohim is in the midst of the city, so that it is not thrown into disarray; Elohim helps the city turn toward the morning.
[Even so] the Gentiles are in a commotion, kingdoms are thrown into disarray; He speaks with [lit., gives] His voice [and] the earth dissolves.	[Meanwhile] the Gentiles are in a commotion, kingdoms are thrown into disarray; He speaks with [lit., gives] His voice [and] the earth dissolves.
Y <sup>e</sup> howah of the Armies [is] with us; the Elohim of Jacob [is] our refuge!	Y <sup>e</sup> howah of the Armies [is] with us; the Elohim of Jacob [is] our refuge!
[Musical] pause.	[Musical] pause.
<b>God Destroys, God Brings Peace; He is our Refuge!</b>	
Come [and] see the works of Yehowah which He has made: [utter] destruction in the earth.	Come [and] see the works of Y <sup>e</sup> howah which He has made: [utter] destruction in the earth.
He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; He breaks the sword [into pieces] and He cuts the spear in two; [and] He consumes chariots [or, war vehicles] with fire.	He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; He breaks the sword [into pieces] and He cuts the spear in two; [and] He consumes chariots [or, war vehicles] with fire.
Be still and know that I [am] Elohim. I am exalted among the nations [or, Gentiles] I am exalted in the earth.	Be still and know that I [am] Elohim. I am exalted among the nations [or, Gentiles] I am exalted in the earth.
Y <sup>e</sup> howah of the Armies [is] with us; The Elohim of Jacob is a refuge for us.	Y <sup>e</sup> howah of the Armies [is] with us; The Elohim of Jacob is a refuge for us.
[Musical] pause.	[Musical] pause.
As you no doubt observe, this psalm proceeds easily with either interpretation.	
Again, the feminine singular noun <i>city</i> is closest to v. 5, although we have references to the <i>earth</i> on both sides of v. 5. Furthermore, the reference to the <i>earth</i> in v. 6 seems to make more sense if we understand the feminine singular forms of v. 5 to refer to the <i>earth</i> .	
It is also significant that, although we have a reference to a river in the city of God, Jerusalem had no river running by it or through it. Nor would Jerusalem be necessarily subject to the natural disasters found in this psalm. However, there are rivers throughout the earth, which can be a great blessing to the populations surrounding them, as well as the occasional source of great disasters.	

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Now you may think, *I don't know if I go along with all this; after all, the feminine singular noun "city" was in the previous verse, and the feminine singular noun "earth" was way back there.* And that is a reasonable comment (I am not aware of any other commentator who puts this kind of a *spin* on this verse). However, if you look at the verbs which we find here, they are very closely related to the idea of the physical laws which God set up and how the earth functions according to these physical laws. Also, take note of the only feminine singular noun in the next verse:

**Roared nations, shaken up kingdoms;  
He gives his voice dissolves [the] earth.**

Psalm  
46:6

**The Gentiles are in a commotion,  
kingdoms are thrown into disarray;  
He speaks with [lit., gives] His voice  
[and] the earth dissolves.**

**The Gentile nations are in a commotion, and the kingdoms are thrown into terrible disarray;  
He but speaks with His voice and the earth dissolves.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	Roared nations, shaken up kingdoms; He gives his voice dissolves [the] earth.
Septuagint	The nations were troubled, the kingdoms tottered: he uttered his voice, the earth shook.
Significant differences:	No significant differences (the Greek translation is within the parameters of the meanings of the Hebrew words).

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	Nations are terrified, kingdoms are shaken; God thunders, and the earth dissolves. Godless nations rant and rave, kings and kingdoms threaten, but Earth does anything he says.
NET Bible®	Nations are in uproar, kingdoms are overthrown. God gives a shout, the earth dissolves.

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word</i> ™	Nations are in turmoil, and kingdoms topple. The earth melts at the sound of God's voice.
JPS (Tanakh)	Nations rage, kingdoms topple, at the sound of His thunder the earth dissolves.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	The gentiles shall rage, Reigns shall topple; He shall give forth His voice, The earth melts.

#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

A Voice in the Wilderness	The nations raged, the kingdoms were shaken; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.
WEB	The nations raged. The kingdoms were moved. He lifted his voice, and the earth melted.
Young's Updated LT	Troubled have been nations, Moved have been kingdoms, He has given forth with His voice, earth melts.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Nations and kingdoms are in great disarray; God speaks, and the earth is dissolved.

## Psalm 46:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâmâh (הַמָּה) [pronounced <i>haw-MAW</i> ]	<i>to murmur, to growl, to roar; to be boisterous or turbulent; to be stirred up or in a commotion</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1993 BDB #242
<p>This verb is used for the sound of bees, the growl of a bear (Isa. 59:11), the snarl of a dog (Psalm 59:7, 15), the cooing of a turtle dove (Ezek. 7:15); for the sound of a harp (Isa. 14:11 16:11). Of other instruments of music (Jer. 48:36); the noise made by a shower (1Kings 18:41); the noise made by the sound of waves (Psalm 46:4 Isa. 51:15 Jer. 5:22 31:35) and the noise made by a disturbed and tumultuous people (Psalm 46:7 59:7 83:3 Isa. 17:12). This verb is also used for internal emotion (e.g., a disquieting of the mind arising from cares, solicitude, or pity) and this can be compared to the sound of certain musical instruments (Isa. 16:11 Jer. 48:36). Finally, this can be used of a person who is wandering about because of unresolved or difficult issues in his or her mind (Prov. 7:11 9:13).</p>			
gôwým (גוֹיִם) [pronounced <i>goh-YEEM</i> ]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, nation</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

**Translation:** [The Gentiles are in a commotion,...](#) This word has a lot of applications, as you can see by reading through the Hebrew exegesis above. Most of the time, there is sound involved; however, there is also the idea of a disquieted mind. That is, the mind is always on; the mind is disturbed; there is always a conversation going on within a person's mind.

Here, I think that more is going on than simply a disquieted mind here; we have a mob scene. There is nothing worse than a group of men involved in a mob scene; they lose control, they scream, they yell, they hurt, they plunder, they destroy. This is man at his absolute worst. This is man without restrictions and without restraints; this is man like raging flood waters which destroy. There seems to be a mob mentality which feeds from the most basic emotions of those there. Some do things that they would not otherwise do, under any circumstances. You place a man in the street, in the light of day, by himself, in a lawful community, and he will generally behave honestly and lawfully. You throw the same man into a mob scene and he is liable to hurt, maim, steal and destroy. This kind of behavior has occurred at lynchings; at KKK meetings; in college universities where a conservative speaker speaks, and there are devoted liberals there to disrupt his free speech; in riots in various cities; and at our Lord's crucifixion.

When we have the word *Goim*, this can be rendered *gentiles* or *nations*, but often the idea is that we are dealing with those who are not related to God; in other words, unbelievers or heathen. In this psalm, we are speaking of great natural events or disasters, and unbelievers, who have no grasp of true reality are disquieted; they are upset. Their souls are in an uproar. They are murmuring, they are growling, and those who are not vocal, their minds are in an uproar.

We have a number of parallels to this portion of v. 6 in Scripture: Psalm 2:1–6: [Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."](#) Psalm 83:1–4: [O God, do not keep silence; do not hold your peace or be still, O God! For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones. They say, "Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!"](#)

## Psalm 46:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mōwṭ (ט ו ך) [pronounced <i>mohṭ</i> ]	<i>to shake, to totter, to move, to dislodge, to throw into disorder or disarray</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #4131 BDB #556
mam <sup>e</sup> lākâh (מ ם ל ך ם) [pronounced <i>mahm<sup>e</sup>-law-kaw</i> ]	<i>kingdom, national government; sovereignty, dominion, reign, dynasty; used to refer to both the royal dignity and to the country of a king</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #4467 BDB #575

**Translation:** ...kingdoms are thrown into disarray;... Throughout the world, we have various forms of government and these governments are tottered and shaken, thrown into disorder.

Barnes comments: *The nations were in commotion, or were agitated like the waves of the sea. This language would well describe the consternation of the nations when the Assyrians went forth to conquest, and when, having subdued so many other kingdoms, they made war on Jerusalem.*<sup>66</sup>

I think what we have here is a contrast; we have a contrast between waters which are raging out of control, and waters which are orderly and found within a stream, within boundaries and confines; waters which sustain a city (or, sustain the earth). Nations and kingdoms are the same way; they can rage out of control, or they can be orderly, with boundaries, and with reasonable confinements. In the previous verse, we spoke of a city as being orderly and under control; and here, we have nations and kingdoms raging out of control, being shaken, dislodged and thrown into disarray.

When people are rightly or wrongly upset over their existence, often they see their governments as the cause. This has become more and more the case as we move along in history. At one time, when a group of people decided that they did not like how things were going, they could essentially pick up and move—they could leave the realm of their government. For others, government played less of a part in their daily lives. Today, government intrudes more and more into our daily lives, making great changes, even, in social order and social customs.

Let me go off on a tangent here, but one which deals with a nation (or, in this case, a people) being thrown into disarray: I just heard someone complain about slavery and how slavery destroyed the Blacks and the Black family. This is untrue. During the time of slavery and, up until about 40 years ago, Blacks had a strong family. However, since government has intruded, and government has tried to *bring the Black man up*, the unintended result has been the destruction of the Black family. If I recall correctly, nowadays, 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of Black children are born out of wedlock. Now, there may or may not be a Black male figure involved, but government has taken up for Black women, and has given economic stability to Black women with children. The result is, Black women have an incentive to remain unmarried; they have an economic incentive to raise their children alone. They perceive the government as being more permanent and reliable than men in general, so depending upon the government for support makes more sense than depending upon a man for support. Our great war on poverty has, for all intents and purposes, destroyed the Black family.

As we become more and more intertwined with our governments, and more and more dependent upon our governments, when things go wrong, our automatic response is to attack the government for its inability to take care of us. We saw this most recently with Hurricane Katrina. 50 years ago, we had great natural disasters, and people with insurance saw if they could get money from their insurance companies; people without insurance did

<sup>66</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:6.

the best that they could, often starting from scratch. At the advent of Hurricane Katrina, government became a major player—every tragedy, every moment lost, was blamed on government. People did not seek relief simply through their insurance companies or they did not do what they could for themselves; people depended more and more upon big government to solve their myriad of problems.

My point is, as governments become greater and greater in their impact on our daily lives, we become more and more disquieted as a people when things go wrong. When people become so intertwined with their government and believe that their misery is caused in part by the government, they riot, they revolt, they attack their own government. The result is, kingdoms and dominions are thrown into disarray.

Now, I don't know whether we should take this one step further and speak of angelic hierarchies. This is a topic that we have very little information about. We do not really know much about the demonic hierarchy and who is in control of who, and how much authority Satan has over his dominion. Nor do I know whether this applies here or not; perhaps even Satanic authorities are thrown into disarray. In Isa. 14:12–17, we read about Satan: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?'"

Psalm 46:6c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nāthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
bē (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

**Translation:** ...He speaks with [lit., gives] His voice... I have assumed here that we are speaking of God, as that would be the closest noun to take on a masculine singular verb (even though Elohim is a masculine plural noun). The idea that God speaks, and amazing things happen, is found throughout Scripture.

Clarke writes: *These words seem to refer to thunder, lightning, and earthquake. The expressions, however, may be figurative, and refer to the wars and desolations already mentioned. God gave the command; and one empire was cast down, and another was raised up.*<sup>67</sup>

The Power of God's Voice	
Scripture	Incident
Gen. 1:3	Then God said, Let there be light! And there was light.

<sup>67</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:6.

The Power of God's Voice	
Scripture	Incident
Psalm 33:9–11	For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. Jehovah brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He restrains and frustrates the devices of the people. The counsel of Jehovah stands forever, the thoughts of His heart from generation to generation.
Psalm 107:25–29	For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because it is bad. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry out unto Jehovah in their adversity, and He brings them out of their distresses. He calms the storm, so that its waves are still. Then they are glad because they are quiet; so He guides them to their desired haven.
Matt. 8:24–27	And, behold, a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us! We are perishing! And He said to them, Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, Of what sort is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him? There are some who argue about the deity of Jesus Christ, despite passages like this, where our Lord does what God does in the Old Testament.

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Psalm 46:6d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûg (מוג) [pronounced moog]	<i>to flow, to flow down; to melt [literally or figuratively]; to dissolve; to cause to pine (or perish)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4127 BDB #556
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:...**[\[and\] the earth dissolves.](#) In the previous verse, recall that we had two possible choices for the verbs: *the city* and *the earth*. Here we find *the earth* again, which does suggest that the previous verse could be applied to the earth just as well as it does to the city.

Here, it is not completely clear what the earth does. Given the cataclysmic things which occur, we might reasonably suppose that this is a volcanic eruption, which appears as if the earth is melting and flowing down; there is also the idea that, God with His voice, *could* cause the earth to completely dissolve, as He will at some point in time (presumably, when there is a new heavens and a new earth).

The NET Bible® offers a slightly different take on this verb: Or “melts.” See Amos 9:5 (*The Lord GOD of hosts, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn, and all of it rises like the Nile, and sinks again, like the Nile of Egypt*). The image depicts the nation’s helplessness before Jerusalem’s defender, who annihilates their armies (see vv. 8-9). The imperfect verbal form



*emphasizes the characteristic nature of the action described.*<sup>68</sup> I think we have two valid takes on this verb: God speaks, and man melts, metaphorically speaking; however, there will come a time when God speaks, and the heavens and the earth will pass away, like worn-out garment.

As I mentioned in the preface, this psalm has a parallel application—first to our daily lives, where we face destruction which is far less than this; but primarily to the cataclysmic events of the Tribulation, where the nations rage out of control and there are great, natural disasters at every hand. And then, God will speak, and the earth will melt.

Now, bear in mind that I gave an odd interpretation to the previous verse, that God is within the earth, seeing to it that it does not totter or become dislodged, turning its face toward the new morning each day—and here, God only speaks, and the earth dissolves (or, *melts, perishes, flows down*). Taking this unusual spin that I have placed on this verse is very much in line with this verse. God holds everything together and in place, and, He can speak, and the earth dissolves or perishes in an instant.

For some of us, who create things with our hands, this kind of destruction is difficult to bear. I had several rooms added onto my house, and I have, with a friend, completed the work on the inside and am presently working on each room on the inside, which includes installing wallboard, built in bookcases, and all kinds of trim work. It is as much a matter of beauty as it is practicality; and very much the work of a practical and artistic thought process. This is the kind of thing which is buried deep in the souls of man; the desire to create; and, once we have created something, it is difficult to let it go; and we do not want to see what we have created destroyed. I live in an area which is occasionally prone to hurricanes and tornadoes and horrendous winds, including down burst and wind sheer, and it is sobering to realize that these many years of work, planning, hammering, and sawing could be devastated by a single storm. Even normal decay will eventually bring this entire structure down. Who knows how akin this is to God, and what He had created, and the devastation which was wreaked upon His creation by Satan.

It might be worthwhile to see the stages of the earth, from creation through at least two restorations.

### From God's Creation of the Heavens and the Earth to the New Creation of the Same

Scripture	Scripture Reading
Gen. 1:1	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Heb. 1:10	And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands."
Jer. 51:15	It is He who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by His understanding stretched out the heavens.
Col. 1:16	For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him.
Heb. 11:3	By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
Psalms 33:6	By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.
Job 26:7	He stretches out the north over empty space, And hangs the earth on nothing.

<sup>68</sup> *The Net Bible*®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:6.

From God's Creation of the Heavens and the Earth to the New Creation of the Same	
Scripture	Scripture Reading
Isa. 45:18	For thus says Yahweh who created the heavens, the God who formed the earth and made it, who established it and didn't create it a waste, who formed it to be inhabited: I am Yahweh; and there is no one else.
Jer. 4:23–28	I saw the earth, and, behold, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I saw the mountains, and, behold, they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth. I saw, and, behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the sky were fled. I saw, and, behold, the fruitful field was a wilderness, and all the cities of it were broken down at the presence of Yahweh, and before his fierce anger. For thus says Yahweh, The whole land shall be a desolation; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and I have not repented, neither will I turn back from it.
Gen. 1:2–3	And the earth came to be [or, <i>the earth became, the earth was</i> ] formless and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim was moving on the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.
Isa. 45:12	I have made the earth, and created man on it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens; and all their host have I commanded.
Isa. 42:5	Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it.
Psalm 24:1–2	The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness of it; the world, and those who live in it. For He has founded it on the seas and established it upon the rivers.
Psalm 15:15–16	May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth! The heavens are the LORD's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.
Psalm 104:5–6	He laid the earth on its foundations; it shall not be shaken forever. You covered the deep as with a robe; the waters stand above the mountains.
Isa. 45:12	I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.
Jer. 10:12–13	It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens. When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses.
2Peter 3:4–6	They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.
1Thess. 5:2–3	For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

From God's Creation of the Heavens and the Earth to the New Creation of the Same	
Scripture	Scripture Reading
2Peter 3:10–12	But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!
Jer. 4:23–28	I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger. For thus says the LORD, "The whole land shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end. "For this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above be dark; for I have spoken; I have purposed; I have not relented, nor will I turn back."
Mark 13:19	For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.
Isa. 51:6	Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.
2Peter 3:13	But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
Heb. 1:11–12	"The heavens and earth, they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end."
Psalms 75:3	The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved: I have set up the pillars of it.
Psalms 102:25–27	Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.
2Peter 3:10–13	But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
Heb. 12:26–29	At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken--that is, things that have been made--in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.
Matt. 24:35	Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

From God’s Creation of the Heavens and the Earth to the New Creation of the Same	
Scripture	Scripture Reading
Isa 65:17	"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
Rev. 21:1	Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

One theory, the one to which I hold, is called the gap theory: that God created the heavens and the earth, and that they were for angelic creation (Gen. 1:1). There was, apparently, some sort of animal life which coexisted with angelic creation; perhaps dinosaurs or some other form of prehistoric animal life. However, when Satan fell and took a third of the angels with him, God froze the earth, apparently by removing the light (Gen. 1:2). Later, whether this is millions or billions of years later, God restored the earth (Gen. 1:3–25), preparing it to be inhabited, and then He created man (Gen. 1:26–31).

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Again, it is interesting that the psalmist is referring to physical calamities which he has probably never seen, living in the Land of Promise.

Barnes sees this much differently than I do, and I will include his viewpoint here, even though I disagree with it: *The very earth seemed to melt or dissolve before him. Everything became still. The danger passed away at his command, and the raging world became calm. The Bible abounds in language of this kind, showing the absolute power of God, or his power to control all the raging elements on land and ocean by a word.*<sup>69</sup>

Gill parallels the verse to the Tribulation and the end times:<sup>70</sup>

Gill’s Parallels between Psalm 46:6 and the End Times		
Psalm 46:6	From the New Testament	Gill’s Comments
The Heathen raged,...	Rev. 11:18 <b>And the nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.</b>	As they did at Christ's first coming, against him, his Gospel, and people; and which continued during the three first centuries; and then the Pagan kingdoms belonging to the Roman empire were removed; since then another sort of Heathens, the Papists, have raged, in violent persecutions and bloodshed of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and will rage again, about and at the downfall of Babylon

<sup>69</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:6.

<sup>70</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:6; some editing was done, including replacing Rev. 18:1 (**And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen**—this is actually Rev. 18:1–2a) with a more appropriate verse from Hebrews.

Gill's Parallels between Psalm 46:6 and the End Times		
Psalm 46:6	From the New Testament	Gill's Comments
...the kingdoms were shaken;...	Rev. 16:14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.	The kingdoms were shaken, either from their Pagan or Papal religion, and became subject to Christ. So it was at the downfall of Rome Pagan; and so it will be at the downfall of Rome Papal; when the kings of the earth shall hate the whore, make her desolate, and burn her flesh with fire. Or they shall be destroyed; that is, those that shall be gathered together in Armageddon, to make war with the Lamb.
...he uttered his voice, the earth melted [or, dissolved].	Heb. 12:26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.	he uttered his voice, the earth melted; like wax, as the inhabitants of the earth do at the voice of his thunder, and as antichrist will at the breath of his mouth; and all within the Romish jurisdiction, signified by "the earth", as it often is in the book of the Revelation, when the voice of the mighty angel shall be heard, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

As we see in the next verse, God is our refuge, even in the greatest of all disasters, the Tribulation.

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What follows in v. 7 and v. 11 is a response to great disasters in the world. It is suggested that these verses are the chorus, to be sung by a different group of people. For instance, the previous 3 verses may have been sung by a soloist, and this verse by a woman's choir. Or, the previous 3 verses may have been sung by a woman's choir, and v. 7 sung by a male choir or solist.

**Y<sup>h</sup>owah of armies [is] with us;  
our high place [or, rock] [is] Elohim of Jacob.  
Selah!**

Psalm  
46:7

**Y<sup>h</sup>owah of the Armies [is] with us;  
the Elohim of Jacob [is] our refuge!  
[Musical] pause.**

**Jehovah of the Armies is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge!  
Musical interlude.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

Y<sup>h</sup>owah of armies [is] with us;  
our high place [or, rock] [is] Elohim of Jacob.  
Selah!

Septuagint

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our helper. Pause.

Significant differences:

Quite frankly, I don't know what the Greek work is above (διαψαλμα), so I don't know if there is actually a problem here. In the Latin, the work is *Protector*; the Syriac is in agreement with the Hebrew.



**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

<p><i>The Message</i> NET Bible®</p> <p>New Jerusalem Bible</p> <p>New Living Testament</p>	<p>Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, GOD of angel armies protects us. The LORD who commands armies is on our side! The God of Jacob is our protector! (<i>Selah</i>)</p> <p>Yahweh Sabaoth is with us, our citadel, the God of Jacob.</p> <p>The LORD Almighty is here among us; the God of Israel [Hebrew: <i>Of Jacob</i>] is our fortress.</p>	<p><i>Pause</i></p> <p><i>Interlude</i></p>
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**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<p>Bible in Basic English</p> <p>Complete Apostles' Bible</p> <p><i>God's Word™</i></p> <p><i>The Scriptures</i> 1998</p>	<p>The Lord of armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our high tower. <i>Selah</i>.</p> <p>The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our helper. <i>Pause</i>.</p> <p>The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold. <i>Selah</i></p> <p>יהוה of hosts is with us; The Elohim of Ya'aqob is our refuge. <i>Selah</i>.</p>
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**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

<p>English Standard Version</p> <p>Updated Bible Version 2.11</p> <p><i>Young's Literal Translation</i></p>	<p>The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. <i>Selah</i>.</p> <p>Yahweh of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. <i>Selah</i>.</p> <p>Jehovah of Hosts is with us, A tower for us is the God of Jacob. <i>Selah</i>.</p>
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**What is the gist of this verse?** Despite these great disasters, Jehovah of the Armies is with us, and the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Psalm 46:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ts <sup>e</sup> bâ'ôwth (תצבאות) [pronounced <i>tz<sup>eb</sup>-vaw-OHTH</i> ]	<i>armies, wars</i>	masculine plural noun, simply the plural of Strong's #6635, but often used in titles	Strong's #6635 BDB #838
'îm (עם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** *Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies [is] with us;...* I am continuing to draw parallels between this psalm and Psalm 24, which was very likely sung during the moving of the Ark. We have this same name used of God in Psalm 24, as well as a mention of Jacob (which occurs in v. 5b below).

Despite all the incredible disasters which are herein described in this psalm, God of the Armies, a title which indicates complete control and power, is with us. God may cause great things to happen, including floods and earthquakes and volcanos, but He is with us, something which all believers should cling to in a crisis.

## Psalm 46:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
misgâb (מִסְגָּב) [pronounced <i>mis-GA<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>height, secure height, retreat; a high place, a rock; hence a refuge, secure place</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #4869 BDB #960
Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
çelâh (חֵלֵךְ) [pronounced <i>seh-LAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to elevate, to exalt [with one's voice], to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; it is transliterated Selah</i>	interjection	Strong's #5542 BDB #699

The verbal cognate is *çâlâh* (חָלַךְ) [pronounced *saw-LAW*], which means *to lift up and toss aside*. In the Piel stem, it means *to weigh*, which involves lifting up the object and placing it upon the balance. Gesenius gives the meaning of *çelâh* as *rest, silence, pause*, as *çelâh* does not necessarily have to match the meaning of its cognates. My thinking, which is a combination of BDB and Gesenius, is that the voices build up to a crescendo here, and, very likely, they are then followed by a vocal (but not necessarily, musical) silence. This would reconcile the points made by Gesenius and still make this compatible with its cognates.<sup>71</sup> Another very reasonable possibility is that the instruments *are lifted up* for a musical interlude. The NLT translation of *Interlude* is very good.

**Translation:** ...the Elohim of Jacob [is] our refuge! [Musical] pause. Jehovah is also called the God of Jacob, referring to one of the Jewish patriarchs (the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham). It is always interesting to find Jacob's name anywhere—this is God's grace! Few men in Scripture have a worse track record than Jacob, whose very name means *supplanter, deceitful*. Yet, because he trusted in Jehovah Elohim, he is saved forever.

In all of these disasters, God is our high place; He is our place of refuge; He is our secure height, He is our Rock. Psalm 9:9: *The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble*. Psalm 18:2: *The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold*. Rom. 8:31b: *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

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## God Who Wreaks Havoc on the Earth will End War Among the Nations

**Come, see [you all], works of Y<sup>e</sup>howah which He has made: devastations in the earth.** Psalm 46:8

**Come [and] see the works of Y<sup>e</sup>howah which He has made: [utter] destruction in the earth.**

**Come and see the work of Jehovah which He has done; complete and utter destruction in the earth!**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

<sup>71</sup> For more discussion, see H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 588.

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	Come, see [you all], works of Y <sup>e</sup> howah which He has made: devastations in the earth.
Peshitta	Come, behold the works of God, for He does wonders in the earth.
Septuagint	Come, and behold the works of the Lord, what wonders He has achieved on the earth.

Significant differences: In an early printed edition of the Hebrew and in the Syriac, we have *God* here rather than *Jehovah*.

Secondly, in the Hebrew, we are speaking of great devastations; the Greek, Latin and Syriac use the word *wonders* instead. Whether there is a problem here or whether this was the spin they translators chose to place upon this word, we don't know. Given the gist of this psalm, and all of the works cited, I believe that *devastations* (or, *destructions*) is an accurate and reasonable word to use here.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	Come! See the fearsome things the LORD has done on earth.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Come and see what the LORD has done. See what amazing things he has done on earth.
<i>The Message</i>	Attention, all! See the marvels of GOD! He plants flowers and trees all over the earth,...
NET Bible®	Come! Witness the exploits of the LORD, who brings devastation to the earth!
New Jerusalem Bible	Come, consider the wonders of Yahweh, the astounding deeds he has done on the earth;...
New Living Testament	Come, see the glorious works of the LORD; See how he brings destruction upon the world.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Bible in Basic English	Come, see the works of the Lord, the destruction which he has made in the earth.
Complete Apostles' Bible	Come, and behold the works of the Lord, what wonders He has achieved on the earth.
JPS (Tanakh)	Come and see what the LORD has done, how He has brought desolation on the earth.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

King James 2000 Version	Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he has made in the earth.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	Come, look at the works of Yahweh, What desolations he has made in the earth.
A Voice in the Wilderness	Come, behold the works of Jehovah, who has made desolations on the earth...
Young's Updated LT	Come, see the works of Jehovah, Who has done astonishing things in the earth.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The reader (hearer) is called upon to come and see what Jehovah has done; what great destruction He has caused on the earth.

Psalm 46:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
châzâh (חָזָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-ZAW</i> ]	<i>to see, to behold; to see [God], therefore, to enjoy His favor, to know Him; to choose</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #2372 BDB #302
miph <sup>e</sup> r âlâh (מִפְעֵלָה) [pronounced <i>mih<sup>e</sup>-gaw-LAW</i> ]	<i>work, a thing made, deed</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #4659 BDB #821
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** [Come \[and\] see the works of Y<sup>e</sup>howah...](#) The psalmist calls out to the reader (or to the hearer), telling them to come and to observe the works of Jehovah. *Works* is in the plural, and it refers back to what we have already spoken of: mountains falling into the seas, waters building up to where they can cause great destruction, mountains trembling and swelling, and the earth melting—earthquakes, floods and volcanic eruptions—these are the great works of Jehovah.

One parallel passage is Psalm 66:5–7: [Come, and see God's deeds -- Awesome work on behalf of the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land. They went through the river on foot. There, we rejoiced in him. He rules by his might forever. His eyes watch the nations. Don't let the rebellious rise up against him.](#)

The NIV Study Bible suggests that this verse is emphatic, as *Y<sup>e</sup>howah* is rarely found in Book II of the Psalms.<sup>72</sup>

The NET Bible® sees these *exploits* as being primarily military,<sup>73</sup> which is certainly at least a portion of what is being spoken of in this verse and psalm. There are a number of passages which deal with God's military devastation of certain nations and peoples; among them: Ex. 10:7 12:30 14:30, 31 Joshua 11:20 2Chron. 20:23–24 Isa. 24:1 34:2–17.

Psalm 46:8b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
sîym (סִיַּם) [pronounced <i>seem</i> ]; also spelled sûwm (סִוַּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i> ]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962

<sup>72</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 826 (footnote).

<sup>73</sup> The Net Bible®; © 1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press (BSP); taken from e-Sword; also found at <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>, Psalm 46:8.

**Translation:** ...which He has made:... The verb here also means *to put, to place, to appoint*. The idea is, God sets these things into motion in His divine decrees. The greatest devastation that we can imagine seeing is a part of the great things which He has set up for this world.

What God does was done in eternity past. God set everything in motion, and took into account every variable and every decision that each person would make and He made provision for all of these things. Some things are going to be wonderful and some things will be disastrous; in all events, He is the same God, and He remains our refuge in times of trouble. No matter what is on the horizon, God has made provision for it in eternity past.

**Application:** By the way, nothing missed His decrees; you are not going to run into a problem, a difficulty, a pressure, for which God has not made provision in eternity past. God not only solved your problem, but He did it before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Psalm 46:8c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shammâh (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shahm-MAWH</i> ]	<i>waste, devastation, destruction; desolation; astonishment; horror</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8047 BDB #1031
The Greek, Latin and Syriac all have the word <i>wonders</i> here; however, given the gist of this psalm, I would think that the Hebrew here is accurate.			
b <sup>o</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>oh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun; with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:**...[utter] *destruction in the earth*. The feminine plural noun here means *devastations, destructions, desolations, horrors*. There are few things which man can do which can equal the devastation of a flood or a volcano or an earthquake; yet, with these massive devastations, the earth has always come back. Psalm 46:2–3: *Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling*. Isa. 13:9: *Behold, the day of Yahweh comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners of it out of it*.

Barnes approaches this psalm with less emphasis upon natural disasters, and more of a view toward national disasters. Since we have seen that this psalm appears to have double meanings throughout, such an interpretation is valid: *The word “desolations” might refer to any “ruin” or “overthrow,” which he had brought upon the land of Israel, or on the nations abroad – the destruction of cities, towns, or armies, as proof of his power, and of his ability to save those who put their trust in him. But if this be supposed to refer to the invasion of the land of Israel by Sennacherib, it may point to what occurred to his armies when the angel of the Lord went forth and smote them in their camp (Isa. 37:36—And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies), and to the consequent deliverance of Jerusalem from danger. Without impropriety, perhaps, this may be regarded as all appeal to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go forth and see for themselves how complete was the deliverance; how utter the ruin of their foes; how abundant the proof that God was able to protect his people in times of danger. It adds great beauty to this psalm to suppose that it “was” composed on that occasion, or in view of that invasion, for every part of the psalm may receive*



a beautiful, and an ample illustration from what occurred at that memorable period. Nothing “could” furnish a clearer proof of the power of God to save, and of the propriety of putting confidence in him in times of national danger, than a survey of the camp of the Assyrians, where an hundred and eighty-five thousand men had been struck down in one night by the angel of God. Compare 2Kings 19:35 2Chron. 32:21 Isa. 37:36.<sup>74</sup>

Matthew Henry writes: *All the operations of Providence must be considered as the works of the Lord, and his attributes and purposes must be taken notice of in them. Particularly take notice of the desolations he has made in the earth, among the enemies of his church, who thought to lay the land of Israel desolate. The destruction they designed to bring upon the church has been turned upon themselves. War is a tragedy which commonly destroys the stage it is acted on; David carried the war into the enemies' country; and O what desolations did it make there! Cities were burnt, countries laid waste, and armies of men cut off and laid in heaps upon heaps. Come and see the effects of desolating judgments, and stand in awe of God; say, How terrible art thou in thy works! Psalm 66:3: Tell God, "How awesome are your deeds! Through the greatness of your power, your enemies submit themselves to you. Let all that oppose him see this with terror, and expect the same cup of trembling to be put into their hands; let all that fear him and trust in him see it with pleasure, and not be afraid of the most formidable powers armed against the church. Let them gird themselves, but they shall be broken to pieces."*<sup>75</sup>

**He causes to cease wars as far as an end of the earth;  
the earth;  
a bow He breaks and He cuts off a spear;  
chariots He burns in fire.**

Psalm  
46:9

**He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;  
He breaks the sword [into pieces]  
and He cuts the spear [in two];  
[and] He consumes chariots [or, war vehicles]  
with fire.**

**He ends wars throughout the entire world;  
He breaks the sword into pieces and destroys the spear;  
and He consumes chariots and tanks with fire.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

He causes to cease wars as far as an end of the earth;  
a bow He breaks and He cuts off a spear;  
chariots He burns in fire.

Septuagint

Putting an end to wars as far as the ends of the earth; he will crush the bow, and break in pieces the weapon, and burn the shields with fire.

Significant differences:

In the Latin and Greek, it is the generic weapon which God destroys; in the Hebrew and Syriac, it is the spear; in the Latin and Greek, God burns *shields* with fire, and in the Hebrew and Syriac, He burns *chariots*. These Hebrew nouns are very common, so I do not know the reason for the difference in the Greek. However, the overall meaning is not changed, and, perhaps, in the Greek, it was more poetic with the minor changes (that is a total guess on my part).

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

God brings wars to an end all over the world. He breaks the arrows, shatters the spears, and burns the shields.

<sup>74</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:8.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:6–11.

Good News Bible (TEV) He stops wars all over the world; he breaks bows, destroys spears, and sets shields on fire.  
 The Message Bans war from pole to pole, breaks all the weapons across his knee....  
 Revised English Bible ...in every part of the wide world he puts an end to war; he breaks the bow, he snaps the spear, he burns the shields in the fire.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Bible in Basic English He puts an end to wars over all the earth; by him the bow is broken, and the spear cut in two, and the carriage burned in the fire.  
 Complete Apostles' Bible Putting an end to wars as to the ends of the earth; He will crush the bow, and break in pieces the weapon, and burn the bucklers with fire.  
 HCSB He makes wars cease throughout the earth. He shatters bows and cuts spears to pieces; He burns up the chariots.  
 JPS (Tanakh) He puts a stop to wars throughout the earth, breaking the bow, snapping the spear, consigning wagons to the flames.  
 The Scriptures 1998 Causing *all* fighting to cease, Unto the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; He burns the chariot with fire.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Updated Bible Version 2.11 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder; He burns the shields in the fire.  
 A Voice in the Wilderness ...who makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots in the fire.  
 Young's Updated LT Causing wars to cease, Unto the end of the earth, the bow he crushes, And the spear He has cuts into pieces, Chariots he does burn with fire.

**What is the gist of this verse?** God causes wars to stop, destroying all weapons of war.

Psalm 46:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâbath (שָׁבַת) [pronounced shaw-BAHTH]	to cause to rest, to cause a work to cease; to sit down [still]; to cause to cease, to put an end to something; to exterminate, to destroy; to cause to fail; to remove, to take away	Hiphil participle	Strong's #7673 BDB #992
mil <sup>o</sup> châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced mil-khâw-MAW]	battle, war	feminine plural noun	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
ʿad (אֲדָ) [pronounced ʿahd]	as far as, even to, up to, until	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
qâtseh (קֵצֶה) [pronounced kaw-TSEH]	end, extremity, outskirts; the whole, the sum	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7097 BDB #892

## Psalm 46:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
This is rendered variously as <i>to the end of...</i> , <i>unto the end of...</i> , and less literally as <i>all over</i> , <i>throughout</i> , <i>to an end all over...</i> , <i>over all</i> .			
<p>ʿerets (עֵרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]</p>	<p>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</p>	<p>feminine singular noun; with the definite article; pausal form</p>	<p>Strong's #776 BDB #75</p>

**Translation:** He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;... Only God can do this. Man does not have the ability to end war. Jesus Christ will usher in a period of peace, but it will come after millions are killed in battle.

**Application:** During this time period (and, probably in other times), we have a very strong anti-war movement in the United States. Many people would feel justified to sit back and to allow, for instance, a brutal dictator like Saddam Hussein to kill hundreds of thousands of his people and to destabilize the Middle East in order to avoid going to war with him. The sharp decline in the monthly death toll (which is far less while we are in Iraq as opposed to when Saddam was in power) would not sway them. I have even heard Saddam justified by liberals—he provided stability in the Middle East and he kept his own people under control (which, even though he would kill approximately 10,000 of them each year), this is preferable in the minds of some to the US being at war. Even if we had a peace-at-any-cost government and people, and that we did everything in our power not to go to war, this would not end war in the world, nor would it decrease the number of deaths of Americans throughout the world. When it became clear that the US will capitulate to almost any demand; when it became clear the US will negotiate anything, then any US citizen anywhere would become a target for the hatred of radical Islam. The chief difference is, instead of the targets being soldiers who have volunteered and trained for their jobs, it will be ordinary citizens.

It's a fascinating time to be alive. In this day and age, a liberal can brand what is happening in Iraq as a civil war—even though Iraqis do not see it in this way—and justify a quick withdrawal for that reason; and yet they can brand Darfur as a genocide, and justify sending in troops there, despite the fact that a genocide is simply a lopsided civil war and despite the fact that there is no direct benefit to the US for such an involvement.

My point in all of this is, no matter who is in power, no matter what group has control, there will always be wars and rumors of wars throughout the world. Our Lord tells us this, just as He tells us “The poor you will have with you always.” No matter how many people attend how many peace marches, and no matter how many soldiers are burned in effigy, war will continue. Man does not have the ability to stop war. Similarly, man does not have the ability to eradicate poverty.

What is also interesting is, those who are against war are not against killing. That is not a problem for them in the least. The anti-war movement view Vietnam as being a great victory for them, a victory that they would like to repeat in Iraq. It does not matter to them that millions died as a result of the US leaving Vietnam; approximately 3 million people died within a year or two of our exit, and this, to the anti-war type, means little or nothing. They see it as the collateral damage of the hawks; they do not see themselves as responsible for these deaths or this suffering in the least. After all, they are *anti-war*; they are good people. What happened in Vietnam after the US left, although far bloodier than the war itself, is not something which they were exposed to night after night after night on the evening news (totalitarian governments do not allow coverage of their atrocities); and, by the time it was known that 3 million people were slaughtered, that number was nothing more to them than a statistic, and one which they could easily blame on those who were involved in the war there; certainly, they bore no responsibility.

We find the same thing in Iraq. Fewer people die in Iraq each and every week now, than died under Saddam. Saddam killed more people in any given month, than all of those who are intentionally killed combined with

collateral damage. However, these numbers mean nothing to the anti-war activist. If the US leaves suddenly, then the blood will run red in the streets, and the number of innocents killed today will be nothing compared to those who will be killed if the US withdraws its troops. This is the opinion of nearly every person who has studied the situation in Iraq. Does this concern anti-war activists? Not even in the least. They will blame any subsequent deaths on President Bush, and they will do that with vigor. In the meantime, these same types make up statistic of people who have died in Iraq. The fervent anti-war types claim that Bush has killed as many people in the past few years as Saddam killed during his entire reign. It does not matter that there is absolutely no support for this. Some people do not require any truth in order to hold a position.

It is also important to note how Jesus Christ will end war: He will not call the great powers to a ceremonial peace agreement, and see to it that everyone signs and agrees to an everlasting peace; Jesus Christ will destroy the armies which are instruments of evil. The blood of these armies will run as high as the horse's bridle.

**Application:** A very reasonable question is, *how do we recognize when an enemy is so evil, that we should go to war with them?* Quite obviously, the US should respond to any army which invades the US, if that happens (which it could); and they should responds to groups who attack our citizens. However, allow me to provide two litmus tests: (1) if an army or a people or a nation is anti-Semitic, to the point that they advocate the destruction of the Jew, that is a clear indication that they are inspired by Satan, who would love to destroy every Jew on this earth. (2) If an army, people or nation is involved in child sacrifice, it is reasonable to destroy them. With regards to the latter, we may think, *only the most backward of civilizations is practicing child sacrifice; such a thing may not even exist anymore.* Wrong! We have Arabic nations who teach their children from a very early age, through cartoons, to desire to kill themselves as suicide bombers. We have a recent family who placed two children inside a truck in Iraq in order to allay suspicions, and then blew their children up in the vehicle. We have a variety of groups who target civilians of all ages—children are not excluded from these attacks. This sort of mindset is Satanic and it is permissible to destroy a people, nation or movement who thinks in this way. I've covered this in more detail in **War and the Christian**. Pastor Kennedy of The Spokane Bible Church as an excellent **Power Point Presentation** on War and the believer as well.

These two tests are not the only tests of a just war; nor are they the only reasons that we should go to war; they are two reasons which are applicable to our time.

Now God, through man, does put a temporary end to war. That is, we destroyed our enemies in World War II and we no longer faced war with the Japanese or with the Germans. However, it was a very short time later when we went to war against Communists in Korea; Communists who had been our allies in World War II.

At the time of this psalm, which we have assumed to occur when the Assyrian army threatened Israel, stopping the Assyrian army temporarily ended its bid for world-wide power. Barnes discusses this issue: *The overthrow of the Assyrian army would probably put an end to all the wars then raging in the world. The Assyrian empire was then the most mighty on the globe; it was engaged in wide schemes of conquest; it had already overrun many of the smaller kingdoms of the world Isa. 37:18–20; and it hoped to complete its conquests, and to secure the ascendancy over the entire earth, by the subjugation of India and Egypt. When the vast army of that empire, engaged in such a purpose, was overthrown, the consequence would be that the nations would be at rest, or that there would be universal peace.*<sup>76</sup> Clarke is more specific: *By the death of Cambyses, and setting Darius, son of Hystaspes, upon the Persian throne, he has tranquillized the whole empire.*<sup>77</sup>

There are a few resources available which deal with the believer and war. R. B. Thieme Jr. has done a number of excellent series on this topic, as well as on our military heritage. [There is a time for peace and a time for war](#) (Eccles. 3:8b).

<sup>76</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:9.

<sup>77</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:9.

## Psalm 46:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qesheth (קֶשֶׁת) [pronounced KEH-sheth]	<i>bow; bowmen, archers; rainbow; [used figuratively for] might, strength</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7198 BDB #905
shâbar (שָׁבַר) [pronounced shaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>To break altogether, to thoroughly break, to break into pieces [teeth, statues, altars]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7665 BDB #990
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qâtsats (קָצַצ) [pronounced kaw-TSAHTS]	<i>to cut off, to amputate; to divide; to cut away, to cut loose</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #7112 (& #7113) BDB #893
ḥănîyth (חַנִּיית) [pronounced khuh-NEETH]	<i>spear</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2595 BDB #333

**Translation:** ...He breaks the sword [into pieces] and He cuts the spear [in two];... We continue the theme of ending war; God will do this; it is not something which we are able to do. God can destroy the weapons of war.

This is interesting and different than *And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more* (Isa. 2:4). In our passage, the weapons of war will be broken; in the quoted passage, they will be converted to another use. In our passage, we are speaking of a temporary cessation of war; in Isa. 2:4, we are speaking of something which will last for a Millennium.

There are several passages with a similar theme: Psalm 76:3–6 Isa. 2:4 60:18 Ezek. 39:3, 39:9–10 Mic. 4:3–4.

## Psalm 46:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿăgâlâh (עֲגָלָה) [pronounced gûh-gaw-LAW]	<i>cart, wagon</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5699 BDB #722
sâraph (שָׂרַף) [pronounced saw-RAHF]	<i>to suck in, to absorb, to drink in, to swallow down; to absorb or consume [with fire], to burn; to bake [bricks]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8313 BDB #976
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿesh (עֵשׂ) [pronounced aysh]	<i>fire, lightening, supernatural fire; presence of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the attendance of a theophany</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #784 BDB #77



**Translation:**...[and] He consumes chariots [or, war vehicles] with fire. The chariot here, or war vehicle, is simply another weapon of war, and only God is able to destroy them completely and for all time. Note that the chariot is not converted to a peacetime vehicle, but it is destroyed with fire.

Barnes: *The expression here may refer to a custom of collecting the spoils of war into a heap, and setting them on fire. This was particularly done when the victors were unable to remove them, or so to secure them as to preclude all danger of their being taken again and used against themselves.*<sup>78</sup> It is interesting that the Jews did not take these weapons to be used as their own.

Interestingly enough, we find several mentions of chariots being burned in Scripture: Joshua 11:6, 9 2Kings 23:11 Nahum 2:13 Micah 5:10.

Nowhere is in the Bible does God call upon man to end war. Jehovah God will end war. He is the only one able to do such a thing.

**Stop and know that I [am] Elohim;  
I am exalted in the Gentiles;  
I am exalted in the earth.**

Psalm  
46:10

**Be still and know that I [am] Elohim.  
I am exalted among the nations [or, Gentiles]  
I am exalted in the earth.**

**Be still and know that I am God;  
I lifted up even by the Gentiles  
and exalted in all the earth.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	Stop and know that I [am] Elohim; I am exalted in the Gentiles; I am exalted in the earth.
Peshitta	Repent, and know that I am God; I am exalted among the heathen and I am exalted in the earth.
Septuagint	Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

Significant differences: The first imperative is different in the Syriac. The remainder is the same.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Our God says, "Calm down, and learn that I am God! All nations on earth will honor me."
Good News Bible (TEV)	"Stop fighting," he says, "and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme over the world."
<i>The Message</i>	"Step out of the traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything."
NET Bible®	He says, "Stop your striving and recognize that I am God! I will be exalted over the nations! I will be exalted over the earth!"
New American Bible	Who says: "Be still and confess that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, exalted on all the earth.

<sup>78</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:9. Barnes also references Virgil, AEn. viii. 561, 562

New Jerusalem Bible	'Be still and acknowledge that I am God, supreme over nations, supreme over the world.'
New Living Testament	"Be silent, and know that I m God! I will be honored by every nation I will be honored throughout the world."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Bible in Basic English	Be at peace in the knowledge that I am God: I will be lifted up among the nations, I will be honoured through all the earth.
God's Word™	Let go of your concerns! Then you will know that I am God. I rule the nations. I rule the earth.
HCSB	"Stop your fighting--and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth."
JPS (Tanakh)	"Desist! Realize that I am God! I dominate the nations; I dominate the earth.:
The Scriptures 1998	Be still, and know that I am Elohim; I am exalted among nations, I am exalted in the earth!

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

MKJV	Be still, and know that I am God! I will be praised among the nations, I will be praised in the earth.
Young's Updated LT	Be quiet, and know that I am God, I am exalted among nations, I am exalted in the earth.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Those to whom the psalm is addressed are told to stop or to abandon whatever project they are involved in, or to simply be still or to be quiet, and know Who God is, and how He will be exalted over the nations and over the earth.

### Psalm 46:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râphâh (רָפָּה) [pronounced raw-FAW]	<i>lose interest</i> [in a person or project] <i>and abandon</i> [that person or project], <i>forsake</i> [something]; <i>let down, stop, desist, leave off; be still, be quiet</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #7503 BDB #951
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced yaw-DAHĠ]	<i>to see; to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to know, to become acquainted, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

## Psalm 46:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾānôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]	<i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied)	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God;</i> transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** *Be still and know that I [am] Elohim.* This is an interesting contrast. Throughout this psalm, we are speaking of great earthly disasters—floods, volcanos, earthquakes—great movement in the earth; yet God calls for the listener of this psalm to stand still, to be still, to stop, to be quiet, and to understand and know that “*I am God.*”

Barnes talks about this verb: *The word used here...means properly to cast down; to let fall; to let hang down; then, to be relaxed, slackened, especially the hands: It is also employed in the sense of not making an effort; not putting forth exertion; and then would express the idea of leaving matters with God, or of being without anxiety about the issue. Compare Ex. 14:13: “Stand still, and see the salvation of God.” In this place the word seems to be used as meaning that there was to be no anxiety; that there was to be a calm, confiding, trustful state of mind in view of the displays of the divine presence and power. The mind was to be calm, in view of the fact that God had interposed, and had shown that he was able to defend his people when surrounded by dangers. If this the divine interposition when Jerusalem was threatened by the armies of the Assyrians under Sennacherib, the force and beauty of the expression will be most clearly seen.*<sup>79</sup>

The NIV Study Bible footnotes this word: *Be still.* Here, the Hebrew for this phrase probably means “Enough!” as in 1Sam. 15:16 (“Stop!”).<sup>80</sup>

The Open Bible says *Be silent* is a rebuke, a call to cease from personal efforts and submit to God. When we do, the Lord is with us, and God is our **fortress**.<sup>81</sup>

Possibly the idea is, God is doing all of the work; we are to let our hands fall and allow Him to do all of the work. This is one verse which is most closely tied to the Assyrian menace which Israel faced under Isaiah. They were unable to do anything; they were now powerful enough to resist the Assyrian army. God let their hands down, and God wiped out the Assyrian army. They let their hands down, and God turned the Assyrian army into dead corpses (as the Bible says). This is also a picture of our salvation as well as our walk through this world with devils filled. We cannot do any of the work to achieve our salvation; and we cannot do anything to protect ourselves from the demons who are all about us, looking to make us fall. These are things which we must allow God to take care of.

I want you to recognize what is being said here: we do not know who the psalmist is, although it could be David. Whoever the psalmist is—probably intentionally unnamed—he speaks from the perspective of God at this juncture. The point is, this is the divine Word; this is God speaking; this is the inspired Word of God. The fact that the psalmist inserts this little phrase is more than just some religious saying; this psalmist is laying clear claim to this being the Word of God.

<sup>79</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:10.

<sup>80</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 826 (footnote).

<sup>81</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 749 (footnote).

Another point which should be made is, the One speaking to the Jew (primarily those who heard the psalms; however, other converts did hear them as well) through this psalm is God—and not simply some localized god, some personage who primarily dealt with Jews. This is the God Who created the universe.

Gill comments: *And know that I am God: own and acknowledge that he is God, a sovereign Being that does whatsoever he pleases; that he is unchangeable in his nature, purposes, promises, and covenant; that he is omnipotent, able to help them and deliver them at the last extremity; that he is omniscient, knows their persons, cases, and troubles, and how and where to hide them till the storm is over; that he is the all wise God, and does all things after the counsel of his own will, and makes all things work together for good to them; and that he is faithful to his word and promise.*<sup>82</sup>

That believers are to know Who God is and to take comfort in that, is found throughout Scripture.

Know that I Am God	
Citation	Passage
Ex. 18:10–11	Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people."
1Sam. 17:45–46	Then David said to [Goliath] the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."
1Kings 18:36	And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word."
Psalms 83:16–18	Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek Your name, O LORD. Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever; let them perish in disgrace, that they may know that You alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth.
Psalms 100:4	Know that the LORD, He is God! It is He Who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.
Gal. 4:7–8	So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.

All Israel and all the heathen were to know that Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel, was God over all.

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An interesting side note to this verse is, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has taken this verse half and has interpreted it to mean that we, men, can become God. "Be still and know that I am God" is something, apparently, that we say when in meditation, and we are speaking of ourselves as *God*.<sup>83</sup> Such an interpretation would have never occurred to me, but this is evil religion coming in and distorting the Word of God. To the Hebrew, the height of blasphemy would be to claim equality with God, and, in case you did not realize, this is a Hebrew psalm. The Jews

<sup>82</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:10 (slightly edited).

<sup>83</sup> From *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, p. 178.

who did not believe in Jesus Christ accused Him of blasphemy because He made this assertion on several occasions. The remainder of this verse reads, **I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted over the earth.** Understanding this as God, the God Who created all, makes perfect sense. Trying to force this to mean that hundreds or thousands of individuals who meditate decide to know that their inner being is God, and that they are, somehow, exalted above all the nations and over all the earth, just does not make any sense. Nor does this jive in any way with Judaism, Christianity or Hebrew religious thought. If we are allowed to simply grab a piece of a verse here or a piece of a verse there, and then to give it some interpretation totally apart from the context or of general Judeo-Christian thought, would allow us to make almost any assertion. If you have any uncertainty about the holiness and separation of God from His creation (us), you may want to reference Deut. 6:4 32:39 (**Behold I, even I, am He, and there is no God beside Me: I kill, and I will make to live: I will smite, and I will heal; and there is none who shall deliver out of My hands**) 2Sam. 7:22 (**that your servant may magnify You, O my Lord; for there is none like You, and there is no God but You among all of whom we have heard with our ears**) 1Kings 8:60 (**that all the nations of the earth may know that the Lord God, He is God, and there is no other**) Psalm 86:8–10 (**There is none like You, O Lord, among the gods; and there are no works like Your works. All nations whom You have made shall come and shall worship before You, O Lord; and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are the great God**) Isa. 44:6 (**I am the First and I am the Last; beside Me there is no God**) Joel 2:27 1Tim. 2:5 (**For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus**) James 2:19.<sup>84</sup> It should be clear that this oddball interpretation of the Maharishi is simply a Satanic distortion. You are not *God*, you are not a *god*; and no amount of meditation is going to change that.

Psalm 46:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rûwm (רום) [pronounced room]	<i>to lift up, to rise, to arise, to raise up, to grow; to be exalted, to become high, to become powerful; to be high an lofty; to be remote, to be in the far distance</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7311 BDB #926
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
gôwÿim (גוים) [pronounced gôh-YEEM]	<i>Gentiles, [Gentile] nation, people, nation</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1471 BDB #156

**Translation:** **I am exalted among the nations** [or, *Gentiles*]... At no time is the God of the Jews ever presented as anything less than the God of the Universe. Throughout the ancient world, there were local gods, for this group and for that group;; for this nation and that nation. However, the God of the Jews is Jesus Christ. The God of the Old Testament is the God of all. Here, He is exalted among the nations (or the Gentiles). The idea is, some outside of Israel have believed in this God of the Jews. I don't know how He was revealed in every case, and what occurred far outside the nation Israel; but God made Himself known to all mankind, as He is the God over all mankind, over all nations and over all groups.

When God destroys the entire Assyrian army overnight (Isa. 37:36), it will be clear that He is God over all the nations; exalted over all the nations.

Some passages which indicate that God is exalted among the nations: Ex. 9:16 Daniel 3:28–29 4:1–3, 37 Rom. 9:17. Daniel 4:1–3 reads: **King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the**

<sup>84</sup> This was paraphrased from *When Cultists Ask*; Norman Geisler and Ron Rhodes, ©1997, Baker Books, Grand Rapids; p. 65.



earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation. God raised up Moses so that His name might be proclaimed throughout the earth (Ex. 9:16 Rom. 9:17).

### Psalm 46:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rûwm (רוּם) [pronounced room]	<i>to lift up, to rise, to arise, to raise up, to grow; to be exalted, to become high, to become powerful; to be high an lofty; to be remote, to be in the far distance</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7311 BDB #926
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun; with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** ...I am exalted in the earth. God is not just the God over man, He is the God over all the earth. God created the heavens and the earth, and He is the ultimate God over all.

This parallels Psalm 24, which refers to God being Lord over all of the earth in Psalm 24:1.

Now, for a brief time, God gave stewardship over the earth to man and man gave this over to Satan; but still, God is over all.

As one would expect, there are numerous passages where God is exalted over all:

God is Exalted Over All	
Scripture	Incident
1Chron. 29:10–11	Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all."
Psalm 21:13	Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.
Psalm 57:5	Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!
Isa. 2:11	The arrogant looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
Isa. 5:15–16	Man is humbled, and each one is brought low, and the eyes of the arrogant are brought low. But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.

God is Exalted Over All	
Scripture	Incident
Ezek. 38:23	So I will show My greatness and My holiness and make Myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.
Rom. 14:10–11 Isa. 45:23	For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."
Philip. 2:9–11 Isa. 45:23	Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Rev. 15:3–4	And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

God the Father and Jesus Christ are exalted, and before our Lord, every knee will bow.

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The NIV Study Bible provides an apt summary to vv. 8–10: *A declaration of the blessed effects of God's triumph over the nations.*<sup>85</sup>

Now we repeat v. 7:

**Y<sup>e</sup>howah of Armies [is] with us  
a high place to us [is] Elohim of Jacob.  
Selah!**

Psalm  
46:11

**Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies [is] with us;  
The Elohim of Jacob is a refuge for us.  
[Musical] pause.**

**Jehovah of the Armies is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.  
[Musical interlude].**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Latin Vulgate  
Masoretic Text

The Lord of armies is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.  
Y<sup>e</sup>howah of Armies [is] with us  
a high place to us [is] Elohim of Jacob.  
Selah!

Septuagint

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our helper.

Significant differences:

The Latin, Greek and Syriac all lack *selah* at the end. The God of Jacob is called our *helper* (*protector*) in the Greek (Latin); and our *refuge* in the Hebrew. Although the distinction is definite; there are no doctrines which are seriously challenged or change by this difference.

<sup>85</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 826 (footnote).

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	The LORD All-Powerful is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress.
The Message	Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, GOD of angel armies protects us.
NET Bible®	The LORD who commands armies is on our side! The God of Jacob is our protector! ( <i>Selah</i> )

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Complete Apostles' Bible	The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our helper.
God's Word™	The LORD of Armies is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold. <i>Selah</i>

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

English Standard Version	The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. <i>Selah</i>
A Voice in the Wilderness	Jehovah of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. <i>Selah</i> .
Young's Literal Translation	Jehovah of hosts <i>is</i> with us, A tower for us <i>is</i> the God of Jacob! <i>Selah</i> .

**What is the gist of this verse?** This is a repeat of v. 7: God is with us, and he is our refuge.

This is repeated, in part, for musical reasons; however, there are times when you must remind yourself of what is true and what you can depend upon. That is the idea behind repeating this line. God of the Armies is on our side; He is our fortress and our refuge.

Psalm 46:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ts <sup>e</sup> bâ`ôwth (תצבאות) [pronounced <i>tz<sup>e</sup>b-vaw- OHTH</i> ]	<i>armies, wars</i>	masculine plural noun, simply the plural of Strong's #6635, but often used in titles	Strong's #6635 BDB #838
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** *Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies [is] with us;...* Again, God is referred to as Jehovah of the Armies, a translation which is often hidden in *the Lord of hosts*. He is called *Jehovah of the Armies* here and He is known as *Jehovah, mighty in war* in Psalm 24:8.

In this psalm, I have made reference to war and our modern participation in war; God is even known as *the Lord of the Armies* in James 5:4, so this is not merely an Old Testament name.

## Psalm 46:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
misgâb (מִסְגָּב) [pronounced <i>mis-GA<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>height, secure height, retreat; a high place, a rock; hence a refuge, secure place</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4869 BDB #960
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to</i>	directional preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-ô-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
çelâh (חֵלַח) [pronounced <i>seh-LAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to elevate, to exalt [with one's voice], to gather, to cast up [into a heap]; it is transliterated Selah</i>	interjection	Strong's #5542 BDB #699

**Translation:** ...The Elohim of Jacob is a refuge for us. [Musical] pause. Again, despite the natural turmoil which occurs all around us, we need to recognize that God is our refuge; God is our safe haven. God is our high place amidst the floods. Selah!

Matthew Henry summed up our confidence in God by saying that, We have His presence and we have his covenant. What more do we need?<sup>86</sup>

Barnes appropriately comments on this verse: *This is the conclusion, or the result of the whole. As applied to the invasion of Sennacherib, this would be clearly seen, for all that occurred in that invasion was adapted to leave the impression that Jehovah, God of hosts, was with the Hebrew people. He had interposed in time of danger; he had saved his city and nation; he had overthrown one of the most mighty armies that had ever been assembled; he had caused the boasting conqueror himself to retrace his steps to his capita; he had wholly delivered the nation from all danger; and he had shown how easy it was, in ways which they could not have anticipated, to bring deliverance. The truth thus conveyed was adapted to the people of God in all lands and at all times, as showing that God has power to defend his people against the most formidable enemies, and that all their interests are safe in his hands.*<sup>87</sup>

## Addendum

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It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

<sup>86</sup> This is distilled from a long paragraph in Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:6–11.

<sup>87</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 46:11.

The NIV Study Bible suggests that the Levitical choir sang the first stanza and the refrain (vv. 7, 11), and that the Levitical leader of the liturgy sang the second and third stanzas.<sup>88</sup> The structure of this psalm allows for such a division of labors.

<b>A Complete Translation of Psalm 46</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
Inscription	
To the Preeminent One; [and] for the sons of Korah, together with young women; a song.	To the One Who is Preeminent and for the sons of Korah, playing off the voices of a female chorus: a song.
God is Our Refuge, even in Great Natural Disasters	
Elohim [is] to us [our] refuge and [our] strength; being discovered [as] great help [when] in distress. Therefore, we are not afraid when the earth changes; when mountains totter into the midst of the seas. His waters roar [and] rise up; mountains tremble before His majesty.	God is to us our refuge and our strength; He exists as our great help when in distress. Therefore, we are not afraid in the face of the greatest natural disasters; even when mountains crash into the midst of the seas. His waters roar and they rise up; mountains tremble before His majesty.
[Musical] Pause [or, musical interlude; lit., Selah!]	[Musical interlude].
Gentiles Might be in Disarray, but Believers are not Shaken	
A river—His canals—make happy the city of Elohim; [and they make happy] the holy dwelling places of the Most High.	The river and His canals may the city of God joyful and they make the residences of the holy Most High joyful as well.
Elohim is in her [ <i>the city's; the earth's</i> ] midst, so that she is not dislodged; Elohim helps her [ <i>the city; the earth</i> ] turn toward the morning.	God is in the midst of the city [or, <i>earth</i> ], so that the city [or, <i>earth</i> ] is not shaken; God helps the city [or, <i>earth</i> ] turn toward each morning.
The Gentiles are in a commotion, kingdoms are thrown into disarray; He speaks with [lit., <i>gives</i> ] His voice [and] the earth dissolves.	The Gentile nations are in a commotion, and the kingdoms are thrown into terrible disarray; He but speaks with His voice and the earth dissolves.
Y <sup>e</sup> howah of the Armies [is] with us; the Elohim of Jacob [is] our refuge!	Jehovah of the Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge!
[Musical] pause.	Musical interlude.
God Destroys, God Brings Peace; He is our Refuge!	
Come [and] see the works of Y <sup>e</sup> howah which He has made: [utter] destruction in the earth.	Come and see the work of Jehovah which He has done; complete and utter destruction in the earth!

<sup>88</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 825 (footnote).



## A Complete Translation of Psalm 46

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
<p>He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; He breaks the sword [into pieces] and He cuts the spear [in two]; [and] He consumes chariots [or, <i>war vehicles</i>] with fire.</p>	<p>He ends wars throughout the entire world; He breaks the sword into pieces and destroys the spear; and He consumes chariots and tanks with fire.</p>
<p>Be still and know that I [am] Elohim. I am exalted among the nations [or, <i>Gentiles</i>] I am exalted in the earth.</p>	<p>Be still and know that I am God; I lifted up even by the Gentiles and exalted in all the earth.</p>
<p>Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies [is] with us; The Elohim of Jacob is a refuge for us.</p>	<p>Jehovah of the Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.</p>
<p>[Musical] pause.</p>	<p>[Musical interlude].</p>

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