

# (How to Understand the KJV Bible) 08 Psalm 46

by Keith Simons

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*Psalm 46 teaches us that we can trust in God's goodness and kindness, and that God's power is greater than the enemy's.*

**Duration:** 21:23

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:1

**Topics:** "KJV Bible", "God as Refuge", "Trust in God's Protection"

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## Description

Keith Simons explores Psalm 46, emphasizing God's role as a refuge and strength for His people amidst turmoil. He explains the historical context of the psalm, highlighting the significance of the sons of Korah and their musical contributions to worship. The psalmist reassures that despite the chaos and pride of nations, God is a present help, providing security and peace to Jerusalem. Simons underscores the power of God's voice to quell conflict and the call for all to recognize His sovereignty. Ultimately, he encourages believers to trust in God's protection and presence in times of trouble.

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## Transcript

Welcome, my name is Keith Symons and these are our talks on how to understand the King James Bible. We're looking today at Psalm 46 and as usual we'll be looking verse by verse and phrase by phrase at the psalm, investigating its meaning and the meaning of the words in it. So the title of Psalm 46 is to the chief musician for the sons of Korah a song upon Alamothe.

The chief musician was an official in God's house, the temple, who obviously organised the music there and the people who sang it were the sons of Korah, members of the family of Korah. Korah died in a rebellion against Moses and against God but his sons did not die. They continued to serve God and they served God in the temple as some of the most important people presenting the music of the worship to God.

A song upon Alamothe. The word Alamothe really means the virgins, the girls, young women but the word is used in the context of musical instruments in chronicles so a song upon Alamothe might mean a song played on musical instruments with higher pitched notes. Verse one.

God is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. A refuge means a safe place, a shelter and a strength, well that's a strong place. So God is a strong and a safe place where we can go to in trouble.

God is the God who looks after us through troubles, a very present help means someone who helps us very soon or now and it's the idea of someone who can be found. If you want someone to defend you against your enemy it's no good if you've got someone who's very loyal and very helpful to you but you can't find them or they're a long way from you. No you need someone who you can find and who's there in that situation of trouble and is there to defend you and to help you and to support you and the psalmist who probably is King David who wrote this psalm we think, he declares that God is the help he has in trouble.

God is the God who defends him. Therefore, verse two, we will, sorry, therefore will not we fear, that's a strange word order but its meaning is simply therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though great changes happen in the world around us, though changes that seem so immense happen in the lives of nations and of people, though the mountains which look so secure and strong are taken and carried into the sea and disappear beneath the sea, we don't fear.

And we might think how powerful countries and important rulers are suddenly swept from power and we might think of the sea as somewhere which is so unstable, verse three, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled. The sea with its great waves, with its noise and its uncertainty, a place where no one can stand, a place where no one can be secure and the places of security, the mountains, in verse two, are being thrown into the sea, though the mountains shake with swelling thereof. Thereof is referring back to the sea, so the waters thereof that we have at the beginning of verse three and the swelling thereof at the end of verse three.

Swelling is an expression which suggests pride. If you try to make yourself look bigger than you really are, well that's swelling, it means getting bigger. And the swelling thereof, the swelling of the sea, the sea is getting bigger, it's rising up.

When you think of a great wave, it rises up from the sea. But when you think of a proud person, that person is rising up, or at least imagining in their mind that they're rising up to something great. And there we've got the mountains, the great, the great things shaking with fear.

And you know, sometimes proud people do rise up. And of course, when we think of pride, we also think of the devil and how he rose up in pride against God. And all that seems powerful around us can seem so weak when people are rising up in pride, or when the devil rises up in pride.

But the psalmist's declaration at the beginning of verse two still stands, therefore, will not we fear? Therefore we don't fear. Why don't we fear? Because God is our refuge and strength. God is present.

God can be found in the time of trouble. And with that bold declaration, that even though mountains are disappearing into the sea, yet we can trust in God. The psalmist pauses and adds the word cellar.

It might mean a pause in the music. It certainly is a good point at which just pause and think about the greatness of the way God defends his people. Then our psalmist continues with the declaration.

Yes, the waves of the sea may be roaring and looking so powerful and so threatening that they could swallow up a mountain. Yes, the enemies may be so powerful and so proud that they look like they could destroy everything in Jerusalem, in God's city, in the place of God's holy places. But Jerusalem has something, something a lot quieter and a lot purer and a lot simpler.

There, verse four, there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. Okay, look at the geography of Jerusalem and that's a curious expression. There is a river because Jerusalem is on the top of a hill.

And the little brook which went by the side of Jerusalem, it's not significant at all. It's down in the valley below the city. It's outside the city walls.

Yet the psalmist pictures this as something powerful because he's thinking of more than that little brook that runs alongside Jerusalem, that little stream. He's thinking of God and God's goodness and God's kindness. And that is like a river flowing into Jerusalem, the river that Jerusalem never knew.

There it is flowing in. What is it that sustains Jerusalem? What is it that keeps the people in Jerusalem, God's city alive? Because God has sent his river, his goodness, his kindness to them. And the streams whereof, in other words, you've got a river and water is flowing from it in little channels for irrigation to provide water to the ground all around.

And so this river of God's kindness, well, it's carried in streams right across the city of God, Jerusalem. Therefore, God's people are glad. Why? Because this is the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

The Most High is a title for God. The tabernacles really means the tents, but it's used as an expression to mean God's holy place, God's temple as it was in days after King David. In other words, God has chosen Jerusalem to be his city and however much trouble there is in the world around, God is looking after his people there.

God is supplying them with what they need. The threatening may be going on all around them, yet nevertheless, they are safe, they are secure, they don't need to worry because God, the Most High, has established his holy place. There.

Verse five, God is in the midst of her. Who is her? Well, the answer is once again, it's Jerusalem. Even though the name of Jerusalem hasn't appeared in this psalm and it's not going to, yet that's what's implied there.

God is in the midst of her, the city of God, the holy place of Tabernacles of the Most High. So he declared in verse one that God is a very present help in trouble. God can be found among his people.

And now he explains in verse five why God is in the midst of her. The midst means the middle. God is in the middle of Jerusalem.

God has his proper place in Jerusalem. Therefore, she, that's Jerusalem, shall not be moved. All these troubles won't disturb Jerusalem.

God shall help her and that right early. God is there to help his people and early in the morning he does it. Yes, we may be going through the night of trouble now with trouble all around us, but the morning is coming.

The morning comes after the night and early God will be there to save his people from their troubles. Verse six, the heathen raged. This is the foreign countries, the enemies of Jerusalem.

They were angry. The kingdoms were moved. He, that's God, uttered his voice.

The earth melted. Yes, the heathen, the foreigners, the people who hated God and his people, they were powerful. They were angry.

They were furious. But what did it take to defeat them? He uttered his voice. Who uttered his voice? God spoke.

God spoke into that situation and the word of God alone was sufficient to destroy all the power of the enemy. The earth melted. It became soft, like wax or like a candle becomes soft when it comes into contact with the fire.

God spoke and everything around, all the enemies who were causing trouble suddenly became weak. They seemed so strong. They seemed so powerful.

And yet now they cannot stand against God because God has simply declared his word against them. Verse seven, the Lord of hosts is with us. The Lord of hosts, the title of God, using God's holy name, the Lord of hosts.

Hosts means armies. The armies of heaven are on our side. The angels are fighting for us.

We don't need to be afraid because God is the God of Jacob. Jacob says the name was Israel, so it could say the God of Israel is our refuge. It's him who we find a safe place with in the midst of all these troubles.

And once more our psalmist pauses with the word Selah. Verse eight, come behold the works of the Lord. Behold means to look.

See what God's done. See what amazing thing has happened because God has been at work in this terrible situation. What desolations he hath made in the earth.

What astonishing things he's done. He's done astonishing things to destroy the power of the enemy which was trying to destroy God's people in Jerusalem, that was trying to fight against Jerusalem. He's shown his power across the world.

Verse nine, he maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth. He is ruling. He's not just ruling over Jerusalem and his people there.

No, now in the psalm, he is declaring his power over the whole world to the end of the earth. In foreign nations, he's gaining power and he's using that power to prevent the wars and the fighting. It's not just enough for him to defend his people.

No, it's his claim to stop the evil things that are going on in the world, to act against the evil forces which fought against his people but which fight against each other. He destroys the power of those evil enemies even to make war. He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder.

He burneth the chariot in the fire. Okay, the bow is a bow which fires an arrow. Today we'd talk of a gun firing a bullet but then a bow sent forward an arrow into war.

So God breaks that bow. He cutteth the spear in sunder. In sunder means in two.

A spear is a knife on a long stick. You break that long stick in two and you've still got your knife but you haven't got the long spear. You can't fight with it.

He burneth the chariot in the fire. People really worried about the chariots because they were carriages which carried soldiers into battle. They could move quickly.

They were frightening. It was the latest military technology. So God burns it up.

He destroys its wood in fire and then he makes a declaration. Be still and know that I am God. I've heard that verse used in churches often when people have wanted a time of quiet.

Well, quietness can be a of this but it really means desist. Stop your fighting. Stop your anger.

Stand back. He's talking to the enemies, the enemies of his people. He's saying I'm God.

I've taken power. My strength is evident. So therefore be still.

Stop fighting. Recognize who it is you're fighting against. Recognize that I, God, have power over you, God says.

I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth. He doesn't just say I will be exalted over the heathen, over the foreign nations, over the enemies.

Exalted means to be greater, to be stronger, to be higher. He's not saying I'm going to take control over those foreign enemies. He's saying I will be exalted among them.

In other words, I claim them to turn to me and to trust in me. No, if they're going to continue to stand against me, they will be destroyed. But I want them to praise me as God.

I want them to recognize me as God. I will be exalted in the earth. Every nation belongs to me.

The people in every nation need to turn to me, says God in verse 10. Then in verse 11 we've got the declaration again. The Lord of hosts is with us.

The God of Jacob is our refuge. And the psalmist declares that he can trust God. The Hebrew word for refuge is a different word from how he began the psalm.

But he's declaring that he can always trust God. God is the defender and the helper of his people. And with that thought, he closes the psalm with one final selah.

Well, I'd love you to write to me. My email address is 333kjb at gmail.com. If you could tell me in your email that you heard the talk on Psalm 46, that would be excellent. 333kjb at gmail.com. So in closing, let me read through to you the whole psalm.

Psalm 46, to the chief musician for the sons of Korah, a song upon Alamoth. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early.

The heathen raged. The kingdoms were moved. He uttered his voice.

The earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord. What desolations he hath made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth. He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder.  
He burneth the chariot in the fire.

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

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