



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V27 N20

May 18, 2025

PSALMS: CELEBRATING CHRIST IN GOD'S HYMNBOOK

"Psalm 46"

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Hope

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with him.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade."

1 Peter 1:3-4



Q?

Who will help you in troublesome times?



To have *hope* is to have a *confident expectation*. That confident expectation is rooted in who God is and what he has promised. If I choose to invest, I *hope* my investment will yield a generous return, but I have no guarantee. I have no *confident expectation* that will be the case. Past performance is no guarantee of future returns. But if I choose to believe what God has promised, I have hope of a different kind. I have a *confident expectation* that I will receive what God has promised based on who God is and his past performance on my behalf for *it is written*, "God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Nu 23:19).

A good illustration of this kind of confident-expectation hope is found in the patriarchs' response to God's promise to Abraham. After he traveled through the land occupied by the Canaanites, the LORD told him, "'To your offspring I will give this land'" (Ge 12:7). Later, the LORD elaborated on the promise. After *cutting* a covenant with him, the LORD told Abraham, "'To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites'" (15:18-21). God's promise was later confirmed to Isaac (26:1-3) and to Jacob (28:13-14).

As the story goes, toward the end of his life, Jacob went down to Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan. God approved of his move, promising to bring him back to the promised land (46:4). Joseph, his son, was in charge of Egypt at the time, so when Jacob died he could have been buried in Egypt, but he chose rather to be buried in Canaan. On his deathbed, he told his sons, "'I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the

Hittite. There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites'" (49:29-32; cf. 47:28-31). According to one commentator, "Jacob again expressed his faith in God's promises that Canaan would be the Israelites' homeland by requesting burial in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Hebron (cf. 47:29-32; 48:21-22). Had Jacob still been thinking in the flesh, as he had earlier in his life, he probably would have asked to be buried with his favored wife Rachel" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Genesis," 2025 ed., 534, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf).

It should come as no surprise that Joseph made the same request of his brothers that Jacob had made of him. He told them, "'I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, 'God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place'" (50:24-25). The same commentator offers these closing remarks: "Joseph probably could have been given a burial in a pyramid or had some other grand burial in Egypt. Like Moses, Joseph chose the promises of God over the privileges of the world. He is a model for all believers, Israelites in the past and present Christians alike. He wanted his family to embalm him and place his body in a coffin in Egypt. Later descendants would bury his bones in the Promised Land near Shechem. They would do so in the parcel of land his father Jacob had bought and given to him, perhaps near Abraham's oak (48:22; cf. Josh. 24:32). This expression of Joseph's faith, in God's promises to his forefathers, provides a fitting climax for the Book of Genesis and the formative period of Israel's history: 'God will assuredly take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob,' (v. 24)" (Constable, 538).

Read Psalm 46:1-11

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah
According to *alamoth*. A song.

1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of
God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

5 God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.

6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

7 The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

8 Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

9 He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

11 The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "*alamoth*" in the superscription of Ps 46.
- Underline "refuge," "strength," and "help" in v. 1, and "fortress" in vv. 7, 11.
- Box "Therefore" indicating *result* in v. 2.
- Box "though" introducing a *hypothetical* or *potential* situation in vv. 2, 3.
- Bracket the verbs "give way," "fall," "roar and foam," and "quake" in vv. 2, 3.
- Circle "river" in v. 4.
- Underline "city of God" in v. 4.
- Bracket v. 6a.
- Highlight vv. 7, 11.
- Circle "desolations" in v. 8.
- Circle "know" in v. 10.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. To whom do the pronouns “our” in verse 1 and “we” in verse 2 refer?
2. Explain the *relationship* of verses 2 and 3 to verse 1.
3. The imagery of verses 2 and 3 is dramatic. What would you say it portrays?
4. There is no *literal* “river” in Jerusalem, so explain the meaning of the *metaphor*.
5. God is within Jerusalem. So what?
6. Put what verse 6 means in your own words.
7. To whom does the pronoun “us” in verses 7 and 11 refer?
8. What do you infer about the peace mentioned in verses 8 and 9?
9. Who is God telling to “be still and know” in verse 10, and *why* so?
10. **Discussion:** On what basis can a psalm in which none of the pronouns refer to the church possibly be relevant to Christians? Talk about it.

Commentary On The Text

"The eye of a hurricane is a remarkable place. Fierce, destructive winds spiral around it at terrifying speeds. Torrential rains encircle it, bringing floods and pounding waves. But within the eye itself, everything is calm and peaceful—a quiet refuge in the midst of the storm. Psalm 46 describes such a place, a spiritual haven from the destructive forces that sometimes surround us" (Jack Kuhatschek, *Peace: Overcoming Anxiety and Conflict*, 23).

About Psalm 46 one commentator writes: "God as our fortress (vv. 7, 11)—as a 'Mighty Fortress' (thanks to Martin Luther)—has been an image comforting believers living in turmoil through the centuries. Psalm 46 is one of the Songs of Zion (also 48, 76, 84, 87, 132). Psalms 46, 48, and 76 follow the same pattern: (a) a confession that 'God is . . . in Zion,' (b) a report that God has stilled Zion's attackers, and (c) imperatives to acknowledge God as sovereign protector—not the usual hymnic imperatives to join in verbal praise (46:8, 10; 48:12-13; 76:11). Like Psalm 48, it appears to be a liturgy punctuated by 'we/our/us' confessions about God in the opening verses and in the refrain of verses 7 and 11. It is possible these may have been sung by a choir representing the congregation" (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 208). The "pattern" in Psalm 46 identified by this author is marked by the repetition of "Selah" at the end of each stanza—omitted in NIV©2011.

The opening stanza (vv. 1-3) contains a confession of faith (v. 1) followed by an assertion of its *explicit* consequences (vv. 2-3). The confession is expressed in complementary *metaphors* followed by a clause that explains their significance. God is Israel's "refuge" and "strength." As his people's refuge he defends and shelters them from their enemies. As their strength, he makes them victorious over their enemies. In other words, he is their *defense* as well as their *offense*. In a nutshell, as the next line says, he is "always ready to help in times of trouble" (GNT). Consequently, his people will not fear no matter what happens. Even if the continents break up and sink beneath the surging waters of the sea, they will not be afraid. Faced with creation's demise, they will find solace in their God. Practically speaking, "The psalm dares us to believe in God when the ground falls out from underneath us" (Broyles, 209).

The second stanza (vv. 4-7) contains an affirmation (v. 4) followed by an assertion of its *implicit* consequences (vv. 5-7). The Most High, like a river, the source of his people's life and blessings, dwells in the "holy place," the inner sanctuary of the temple, locat-

ed in "the city of God." His unique presence in Jerusalem guarantees its security and the security of Israel. Nations may roar against her, but kingdoms that do so fall as a consequence of his judgment. God lifts his thunderous voice and "the earth melts," not literally but in fear as he routs Jerusalem's enemies leaving the earth desolate in the wake of his fiery judgment (v. 8). "The tumult of the nations and God's thundering voice depict a terrifying scene, but within the city we hear the psalm's refrain, 'the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress (lit. 'our high refuge' from the underlying chaos)'" (Broyles, 210).

The closing stanza (vv. 7-11) contains an invitation (v. 8-9) followed by command and prophetic announcement (v. 10). God's people are invited to consider his exploits. He brings judgment and establishes peace. While "the works of the Lord" include all his works in the past, the fact that he "makes wars cease to the ends of the earth" implies a future work that that will bring peace to the whole world (cf. Ps 47:2, 8-9). God's victories in the past are but a foretaste of things finally to come when Christ returns. One commentator explains: "Every victory, every subjugation of a hostile nation, and every stroke on the canvas of the history of redemption bring more clearly into focus that the Lord's very plan for humankind includes the cessation of wars and the era of peace. His wars and his judgments of the nations have as a final end the removal of evil instigators, troublemakers, rebels, and expressions of hostility in whatever form" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, EBC, rev. ed., 5:407). This future era of universal peace will accompany God's exaltation among the nations in the person of messiah (Isa 9:6; 11:1-9; Eze 37:21-28; Lk 1:32-33; 2:14).

The world is filled with plenty to worry about. It's filled with environmental, economic, social, and geopolitical concerns in general, not to mention the escalation of conflicts around the world, e.g., the current turmoil in the Middle East. What's more, we all face individual concerns, in particular, regarding our health and finances, our families and friends, our jobs and our future, e.g., will I have enough money to retire? These are things for which Christians most frequently request prayer: health, finances, jobs, and relationships. Needless to say, all these concerns create anxiety. This psalm teaches us that the One who holds the future in his hands holds his people in them as well. Confessing we believe that he is our refuge, strength, and fortress is easy; bringing our hearts to feel that confessed security is monumental.

Word Studies/Notes

Superscription *Sons of Korah* “the Levitical choir made up of the descendants of Korah appointed by David to serve in the temple liturgy” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ps 42 title).

Superscription *alamoth* “According to The Sheminith (Pss 6 and 12) is a companion term in 1 Chronicles 15:21 to **According to Alamoth** (Ps 46; 1 Chr. 15:20). The passage in Chronicles, describing the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem, tells of eight Levites who were ‘to play harps according to Alamoth’, and six who were ‘to lead with lyres according to the Sheminith’. Alamoth (*‘alamot*) means ‘girls’; Sheminith (*seminith*) means ‘eighth’. Although the latter is very enigmatic to us (the eighth string? The eighth and crowning ritual act?), the majority opinion is that Alamoth means the treble range, and Seminit therefor the tenor or bass” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, TOTC, 55-56).

v. 1 *refuge, strength, help* “This great God is ‘ever-present’ with his people. His presence in protecting the people of God is described by three metaphors and one explanatory clause. The metaphors are ‘refuge,’ ‘strength,’ and ‘fortress’ [vv. 7, 11]. These three words function as synonyms designating the source and effectiveness or Israel’s strength, God is their ‘strength’ (cf. 29:11; 68:35; 71:7; Isa 26:1). As their strength he is like a ‘refuge’ where one finds rest and asylum (cf. 14:6; 61:3; 62:7-8; 71:7; 73:28; 91:2, 9; 142:5; Isa 25:4; Jer 17:17). His strength is also evident when they find protection in him as a ‘fortress.’ Fortresses were strongholds built on isolated, elevated places (cf. Isa 33:16) to provide protection against enemies (cf. 9:9; 18:2; 48:3; 59:9, 16-17). Each of these metaphors relates to a people in need. Only when they are in distress do they need his special protection (cf. 22:19; 27:9; 40:13; 44:26; 63:7). They always need him, but they experience his presence especially when they go through a period filled with anguish and distress (cf. 23:4). Then he is close to them (v.1; cf. Dt 4:7)” (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 404).

vv. 2, 3 *give way . . . quake* “This is not only a powerful word-picture, built up of the two things that are most immutable and impregnable, *the earth* and *the mountains*, over against the symbol of what is most restless and menacing, *the sea*; it begins to contemplate the end of the whole created scheme, by which the earth, the mountains and the waters were set in place, as described in, e.g., 104:5-9” (Kidner, 192). “It is just possible that the author had in mind the world catastrophe which would (so it was believed) precede the messianic age (so Oesterley, Weiser)” (A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*, NCBC, 356).

v. 3 *Selah* Omitted from the NIV©2011. Perhaps the word signals and interlude or

a change of musical accompaniment” (Anderson, 51).

v. 4 *river* “The Hebrew *nāhār* (see on 72:8) is a perennial stream (cf. 74:15, 107:33) but there was no such river in Jerusalem, unless the writer had in mind the tunnel of Hezekiah, or the spring of Gihon (cf. Guthrie, ISS, p. 93)” (Anderson, 357). “Thus, this river of Psalm 46 is probably an image depicting **the holy place** (i.e., the sanctuary) **where the Most High dwells** as the source of life for the city of God. This image is developed later in Ezekiel’s vision of a new temple after the restoration from exile (47:1-12)” (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 209).

v. 4 *city of God* I.e., Jerusalem, the city where the holy place is located “where the Most High dwells” (v. 4b).

v. 4 *Most High* Heb. *Elyon*. “In Canaanite religious thought, El the creator was the supreme deity of the Canaanite pantheon. Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, served El Elyon (NIV, ‘God Most High’) whom Melchizedek knew as ‘Creator of heaven and earth’ (Ge 14:19) . . . Israel believed that only Yahweh is El Elyon (‘God Most high,’ cf. Ge 14:22). The psalmists, too, use the epithet ‘Elyon’ to refer to Yahweh . . . ‘For you, O LORD, are the Most High [Elyon] over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods’ (97:9). He is Yahweh Elyon, and there is no other Elyon than Yahweh!” (VanGemeren, 152).

v. 5 *break of day* I.e., when attacks against cities were typically launched.

v. 6 *melts* “Verse 6 closely parallels verses 2-3. As ‘the earth give[s] way,’ so here **the earth melts**. As ‘the mountains fall,’ so here **kingdoms fall**. As ‘waters roar,’ so here **nations are in uproar** (cf. 65:7). The chaos of cosmic collapse and the chaos of political and military upheaval are thus presented as parallel forces. What is striking, however, is how the city of God stands contrary to these forces. By contrast, **she will not fall**” (Broyles, 210).

v. 9 *wars cease* “Although the outcome is peace, the process is judgment. The reassuring words, *he makes wars cease* . . . , are set in a context not of gentle persuasion but of a world devastated and forcibly disarmed (8, 9b). This sequence, with tranquility on the far side of judgment, agrees with Old Testament prophecy and apocalypse, and with the New Testament (e.g., Isa. 6:10-13; 9:5; Dan. 12:1; 2 Pet. 3:12f)” (Kidner, 194-95).

v. 10 *be still* “This may be addressed to the nations who are exhorted to abandon their futile hostilities against God (2:10), or, more likely, it is a command directed to the people of God who are counseled to reject all foreign alliances and to depend entirely upon Yahweh (cf. Isa. 30:15)” (Anderson, 360).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THIS PASSAGE

“A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing” in whom we place our confidence as we look toward the future he has in store.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

Be still. I know what you're thinking. You've got choir concerts, end-of-year awards, prep for vacation and of course dinner, which happens every single night. Laundry is piling up, your tween son grew three inches and needs a new pair of slacks, there are at least seven graduation party invitations that you still haven't sifted through and your job might be on the line if you don't meet that deadline. Add in the teenager's trauma dump over a broken relationship and driver's ed. Be still. This is everyday life for most parents and can be exhausting. Now add to the mix a devastating diagnosis, financial strain or deeply fractured communication with your spouse, and you might hit your breaking point. Be still and know He is God. God never steps off His throne. He never stops being in control. "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Exodus 14:14). When it seems your world is crumbling, take a moment. In prayer, give God your concerns and worries knowing with confidence He loves you and cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). My guess is you're all wound up, so take some deep breaths. As you breathe in, tell yourself, "The Lord will fight for me." Breathing out, remind yourself, "I need only to be still." Reorient your mind to the things of God by stepping outside and marveling at His creation or turning on your favorite worship song. Jesus guarantees we will have trouble in this world. Knowing He has overcome the world offers us peace, hope and joy. Be still. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 46.

1. What do you learn about God in verse 1?
2. What does verse 2 say about us when we know who God is?
3. What does God tell us to do in verse 10?

What Do You Think?

Why does God tell us to be still?

What Do You Do?

Play freeze dance with your family. How hard is it to be still and wait for the music to play?

CORE COMPETENCY: Hope

I cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 6:9

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Fort Worth, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2025 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.