

## God Is My Fortress Psalm 46

### "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

Words & music written by Martin Luther, (Catholic) Nailed his 95 Thesis to door of cathedral in Wittenberg in 1517, was excommunicated in 1520. Leader of reform movement in 16th century Germany against Roman Catholic Church.

Given asylum at Wartburg Castle in 1520, used time to translate New Testament from Greek to German and wrote hymns in language of common people so they could understand their religion. Some think this castle and its security was in mind when he later wrote this hymn.

This was one of the most powerful hymns of the Reformation movement. It was apparently produced in 1529 at Coburg when Luther was 45 for the Diet of Speier (or Spires) and published in a Wittenberg hymnbook that same year. Our English translation of this hymn was done in 1852 by a Harvard professor, Frederick Henry Hedge (1805-1890). It was first published in the 1853 "Hymns for the Church of Christ." The version of the melody as we know it is taken from the arrangement and harmonization of a German composer named, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). His 1717 Cantata #80 is based on the hymn.

There were originally 4 stanzas in all, but most of our books have only three, with the third made up of sections taken from Luther's stanzas 3 and 4.

It presents God a source of protection. This idea is seen in multiple Psalms

Difficult words and song to understand

Retains writing style of its time. Word/phrase order (sentence structure) different causing some difficulty. Also includes words we may not use much.

Fortress - mountain stronghold, refuge; a large and permanent fortification sometimes including a town

Bulwark - a solid wall-like structure raised for defense

Sabaoth - From Latin/Greek/Hebrew terms - armies, hosts

### A Fortress & Bulwark

**Verse 1** - "A mighty fortress is our God, A bulwark never failing; Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not his equal."

"Bulwark" - defensive wall around fortress serves as a refuge: - **Psalm 94:22; 46:1-2; 31:1-5; 1Peter 5:8**

### Trust in God not Self

**Verse 2** - "Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right One on our side, the Man of God's own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth [is] His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle."

Since God is our refuge, we must look to Him for strength and not ourselves: - **Psalm 91:2; 18:1-3**

God provides strength we need through the right One, Jesus. He became human so He can aid us - **Hebrews 2:17-18**

But He is not only man; He is also Lord Sabaoth (of Hosts) - **Romans 9:29; James 5:4**

Protection is found in His Word (guarded) - **1Peter 1:3-5**

### God Is Always Victorious

**Verse 3** - "And though this world, with evil filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. (The prince of darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo! his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.)"

The world is filled with evil that threatens to destroy us - **1Peter 4:12; 1John 2:16; James 4:4**

Yet, Satan is doomed - **Genesis 3:14-15**

God's Word gives victory - **2Timothy 2:15; Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41**

While our books do not have the last half, might I suggest a most powerful little word against our foe would be NO!

## **God is Forever**

**Verse 4** - "(That word above all earthly powers--No thanks to them--abideth; The Spirit and the gift[s] are ours Through Him who with us sideth.) Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever."

His Word endures and protects us by developing our faith in Him - **1Peter 1:3-5; Ephesians 6:11**

With this, no matter what happens, we can enter Heaven victorious - **Matthew 10:28; 2Peter 1:10-11**

His Kingdom will never end - **Ephesians 1:15-23**

## **Truly "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"**

Through faith we can find the safety and protection we need in this wicked world. - **1John 5:4**

The Word of God will protect us! - **Ephesians 6:10-18**

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