

Be Still and Know: Beholding God in the Psalms

Lesson 1: Introduction and Psalm 46

I. Introductory matters

- a. Genre
- b. Special features of Hebrew poetry
 - i. Metaphor: With the use of metaphor the author can take very abstract, even complex ideas and assign to them images that the reader can understand and visualize
 - ii. Parallelism: A literary pattern that states an idea in one line and focuses more closely on the same idea in the following line, either repeating the thought in different terms or focusing the thought more specifically. The second line can complete the idea, deepen the idea, or draw a contrast to the idea (Psalm 46: 1; Psalm 20:7, 8)
 - iii. Refrain: key lines that are repeated in a single poem (Psalms 46:7, 11; Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5)
 - iv. Inclusio or bracketing: When a poem begins and ends with similar couplets (Psalm 103)
- c. Authors, structure, historical background (see chart)
- d. Date
- e. The big picture
 - i. Metanarrative = overall storyline, the plotline of the Bible as seen from the 10,000 foot view
 - ii. Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration
 - iii. Home – Exile – Return
- f. Overall purpose of the Psalms

II. Psalm 46

- a. God is our _____ (vv. 1-3, 5, 6)
- b. God is our _____ (v. 4)
- c. God is our reigning _____ (vv. 8-10)

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

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 pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

And though this world, with devils 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.

That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts 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.

- Martin Luther, 1529

Time to "marinate":

- 1) What stood out to you the most from today's lesson and why?
- 2) What aspect of God's character from Psalm 46 resonates the most with you right now?
- 3) What are your top two or three hindrances to being still and intentionally mediating on God?
Make this your priority in praying for each other throughout this study!