

Housegroup Study – 3rd August 2016

Psalm 46

Day 3

The Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him.

Psalm 32:10

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Psalms: The Old Testament Hymn Book

A book of poems, intended to be sung, not doctrinal treatises, not sermons.

This hymn has three verses and a chorus (in italics)

Context ([2 Kings 18:13-19:25](#))

Seige of Jerusalem 701 BC

Senhacherib, King of Assyria, had troubles in the east of his empire so Egypt and Judah in the west decided to take advantage.

Egypt wanted to expand and Judah was dependent on Egypt for military support.

Judah, as a vassal state of Assyria, just wanted to default on its tribute payments to Sennacherib.

Sennacherib eventually dealt with the east and moved to the west, with a vast army and brutally conquered all of Judah except Jerusalem which was besieged.

In all likelihood, this psalm was written as encouragement during that siege.

v1-7

Is it because of the people's merit that God is a 'strength and refuge' and a very present (both chronologically and geographically) help in trouble?

No. at the time they are rebelling against Him and putting their hope in Egypt to protect them from the Assyrians.

God, though, he has made a covenant with the people in His place to achieve to achieve his purpose through them (4)

In verses 2 & 3 what are the earthquakes, landslides and raging seas images of?

Raging nations and tottering kingdoms.

"Uncreation" .. The end of the world.

There are big contrasts between verses 2,3 and 4,5. What are they?

Mountains may fall (2) but Zion (5) will not

Raging seas (3) but gently flowing streams (4)

v8-11

Isaiah 2, 1-5:

The mountain of the Lord

- 1 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:
- 2 in the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.
- 3 Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.'
The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
- 4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.
- 5 Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Why has God chosen Zion?

So that knowledge of Him might be known throughout the whole world bringing all to live in godly peace with one another.

What are verses 8 & 9 saying in the context of the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 BC?

The work of God is illustrative of his power and authority.

Those who hear about it should wise up and realise that what He has partially done in 701 BC He will finally and fully complete on the LAST DAY

What bearing does this have for His covenant people (the Church) today?

The Church will survive and bear witness in some form until the LAST DAY

(in the original Hebrew) Verse 10 'be still and know' is plural. Who is it addressed to?

The Nations, all the earth

(Now we come to the hard part – what does this mean to us)
How does that manage to get through to listeners today?

*Not by simply sitting in an armchair and emptying our minds!
But by getting us and God in perspective and recognising his power, authority, generosity and mercy towards us*

How might someone near the end of their life find comfort in this psalm?

Not by immediately thinking that they will live. But by knowing that as they pass through death He will still be with them ushering them into a place of peace (heaven) and ultimate the new creation of peace (heaven and earth perfectly together again)

The postscript:

The Angel of the Lord put to death 185,000 of the Assyrians.

Senhacherib withdrew to Ninevah where as prophesied by Isaiah, he was killed by own sin.

But Jerusalem (Zion) is a special city in the purpose of God.

The city through which he will bless the world. (See Ps 48, 76, 87 & 122)

Psalm 46

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

Sons of Korah: Refers to the Levitical choir made up of the descendants of Korah.

According to Alamothe .. probably a musical term .. "young women playing the timbrels"

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.

[The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.]

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.*

2 Kings 18:13 – 19:25

- 13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.
- 14 So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: 'I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.' The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.
- 15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace.
- 16 At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the Lord, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Sennacherib threatens Jerusalem

- 17 The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They came up to Jerusalem and stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field.
- 18 They called for the king; and Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to them.
- 19 The field commander said to them, 'Tell Hezekiah:
' "This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: on what are you basing this confidence of yours?
20 You say you have the counsel and the might for war – but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me?
21 Look, I know you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him.
22 But if you say to me, 'We are depending on the Lord our God' – isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?'
23 "Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses – if you can put riders on them!
24 How can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen?
25 Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the Lord? The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it." '
26 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, 'Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.'
27 But the commander replied, 'Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall – who, like you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?'
28 Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, 'Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria!
29 This is what the king says: do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand.
30 Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, "The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."
31 'Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig-tree and drink water from your own cistern,

- 32 until I come and take you to a land like your own – a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death!
'Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, "The Lord will deliver us."
- 33 Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?
- 34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand?
- 35 Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'
- 36 But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, 'Do not answer him.'
- 37 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

Jerusalem's deliverance foretold

- 1 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord.
- 2 He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.
- 3 They told him, 'This is what Hezekiah says: this day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them.
- 4 It may be that the Lord your God will hear all the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the Lord your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives.'
- 5 When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah,
- 6 Isaiah said to them, 'Tell your master, "This is what the Lord says: do not be afraid of what you have heard – those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.
- 7 Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword."'
- 8 When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah.
- 9 Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush, was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word:
- 10 'Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, "Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria."
- 11 Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered?
- 12 Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them – the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezep and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar?
- 13 Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?'

Hezekiah's prayer

- 14 Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.

- 15 And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: 'Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.
- 16 Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.
- 17 'It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands.
- 18 They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands.
- 19 Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God.'

Isaiah prophesies Sennacherib's fall

- 20 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria.
- 21 This is the word that the Lord has spoken against him:
- ' "Virgin Daughter Zion despises you and mocks you. Daughter Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee.
- 22 Who is it you have ridiculed and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel!
- 23 By your messengers you have ridiculed the Lord. And you have said,
'With my many chariots I have ascended the heights of the mountains, the utmost heights of Lebanon.
I have cut down its tallest cedars, the choicest of its junipers.
I have reached its remotest parts, the finest of its forests.
- 24 I have dug wells in foreign lands and drunk the water there. With the soles of my feet I have dried up all the streams of Egypt.'
- 25 ' "Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone.