

**Beginning of the Commentary on Psalm 46**

Continuing our series of commentaries on the Psalms, today we will focus on Psalm number 46, verse 4, from the Holy Bible. This Psalm is very famous and is regularly sung in churches even in Punjabi language:

*"The Lord is our strength and also our refuge; He helps us in difficult times. He is our God!"*  
Open Psalm 46 with me.

It says:

For the chief music director, a song of the sons of Korah, a song on Alamoth:

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

Therefore, we will not fear, even if the earth changes, and mountains are thrown into the depths of the sea; even if its waters roar and be troubled, and mountains shake because of its swelling.

**Text and Explanation of Psalm 46**

There is a river whose streams bring joy to God's city, the holy place where God lives. God is there, so it will never be shaken; God will help it early in the morning. Nations may be troubled, kingdoms shaken; the earth may give way, but God is with us—God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, see what the Lord has done—he makes wars stop on the earth. He breaks bows, shatters spears, and burns chariots with fire.

*"Be still and know that I am God; I will be honored among the nations; I will be honored throughout the earth."*

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

**Historical Background of Psalm 46**

Psalm 46 is believed to have been written in a historical situation around 701 BC, when King Sennacherib, an Assyrian king, attacked Jerusalem and surrounded the people of Israel. You will find this story in 2 Kings chapters 18 and 19, and also in Isaiah chapters 36 and 37. God protected Israel, and according to 2 Kings 19:35, 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were destroyed. God saved His people.

Psalm 46 was written during this time—when God's people were under attack from an enemy king, but the Lord saved and protected them.

**Importance of Psalm 46 Today**

Even today, no matter what your situation is—personally, with your family, or as a nation, or whatever is happening in our country—we must trust God. He is our refuge, strength, help, and protector in every kind of trouble and attack.

**Literary Style and Division of Psalm 46**

In terms of style, Psalm 46 is a "Psalm of Trust" or "Psalm of Confidence," like Psalm 23 and Psalm 91. It shows trust in God against enemy attacks.

It is also called one of the "Zion Psalms," along with Psalms 48 and 76, because verse 4

especially focuses on Jerusalem—the city of God's presence—and God's promise to protect it from enemies. Jerusalem will always stand because of God's grace.

### **Structure of Psalm 46**

This Psalm has 11 verses and can be divided into three parts:

- Verses 1 to 3: God is refuge, strength, and help in trouble.
- Verses 4 to 7: Picture of safety for the holy city Jerusalem and God's presence there.
- Verses 8 to 11: A call to be still, stop fighting, and trust God.

### **Detailed Study of the First Three Verses**

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

- "Refuge" (Hebrew: מַחֲסֶה, machaseh) means a safe place, like a strong fortress where people hide during war. It is the same word used for "refuge cities" in the Bible and the eagle's nest. It is a safe shelter from death.
- "Strength" (Hebrew: כֹּחַ, oz) often means power and help for salvation and protection. God's strength is not just about being strong but saving and protecting us. Many powerful people do not use their strength to protect others, but God gives His strength to save us. Hallelujah!
- "A very present help in trouble" means God is always there for us in trouble, not turning away but intentionally near us. Like soldiers hiding in bunkers in war, God is our fortress, refuge, strength, and help.

### **Explanation of Verses 2 and 3**

Even if the world is destroyed, God is still our refuge, strength, and help.

*"We will not fear even if the earth shakes, mountains fall into the sea, waters roar and flood, and mountains tremble from the waves."*

Why? Because verse 1 tells us God is our refuge, strength, and ready help in trouble.

### **Ancient Near East View**

In the Ancient Near East (where the Old Testament was written), people thought earthquakes and storms were signs of God's judgment. They believed many gods controlled seas and storms, and big waves meant gods fighting.

But the Psalm writer says Israel's God, Yahweh, is in control of all these gods and their chaos. If the sea shows confusion and trouble, Yahweh is the sign of stability and strength. Hallelujah!

### **Theological Point for Us**

Brothers and sisters, even if the universe is destroyed and everything is wiped away, God's people will stand firm because they are in God's refuge and fortress. This strong fortress protects them from earthquakes, floods, storms, and all dangers.

If you read Hebrews 12:26-28, it says God will shake the heavens and earth, but those who fear God and belong to Him will not be shaken because our God is a consuming fire.

### **Explanation of verses 4 to 7: The Safety of Jerusalem**

After that, when we continue, in verses 4 to 7, as I explained, there is a claim about the safety of the city of Jerusalem.

It is written:

"There is a river whose branches make God's city, the holy place of the Lord, joyful" (verse 4).

Then in verse 5 it says:

"God is in it; it will never be shaken."

Here is something to understand: by "God's city" here, it means the city of Jerusalem, which for the people of Israel was the religious, spiritual, and geographic center of the world.

It is written that there is a river whose branches, whose flowing water, give joy, freshness, and happiness to God's city, meaning Jerusalem. Now, commentators say that naturally there was no big river in Jerusalem that gave water to the whole city and kept it fresh and lively. So the river mentioned here, whose branches and water give joy and freshness to Jerusalem and protect it, is not a natural or physical city. Instead, this city is the city of Yahweh God.

This river — I am sorry — is not a natural river; it is Yahweh God Himself, who by His presence, by being there, gives joy, freshness, and safety to the city of Jerusalem.

### **Reference in Old Books**

In this connection, we also find some references in other old scriptures.

If you read Ezekiel chapter 47, verses 1 to 12, it is symbolically explained that a river flows from the temple. First, the water reaches the prophet's ankles, then knees, then waist, and then it reaches his mouth.

The river flowing from the temple is a sign of God's presence.

In Ezekiel chapter 47, the river flowing from the temple is a metaphor, a symbol of God's presence. Here too, it is told that the river which gives joy, freshness, and safety to the holy temple of Jerusalem by its presence is God Himself. So life in the holy temple of Jerusalem comes because of the river of God's presence.

### **Mention of the River in Genesis and Revelation**

If you look at the beginning of the Old Testament, in Genesis chapter 2, verse 10, it is mentioned that rivers flowed in Eden, four rivers.

Then at the end of the Bible story, in Revelation chapter 22, verses 1-2, when the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, comes down to the earth, it is written that in that city the river of life flows, whose leaves heal the nations, meaning they give salvation. That river there is a sign of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Psalm Writer's Contrast with Babylon's Rivers**



Commentators believe that here the Psalm writer is making a contrast with the rivers and canals flowing in Babylon.

For example, when Jewish people were captives in Babylon, look at Psalm 137, verse 1:  
"We sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept remembering Zion."

When they were captives in Babylon, they sat by the rivers there and cried. But now when they are in the holy city Jerusalem, they are not crying, but the river of God's presence gives them joy, happiness, and safety. Hallelujah!

### **Similarity Between the Hebrew Word "Nahar" and Urdu "Nehar"**

One more interesting thing: the Hebrew word for river used here is "nahar." What is it? Nahar. In Urdu, there is a similar word used for canals and rivers, which is "nehar."

So the Hebrew word "nahar" and the Urdu word "nehar" are very similar and both mean the same thing: river, stream, flowing water.

### **God's Presence and the Heavenly Jerusalem**

It is written that God is in this city, He is in Jerusalem.

As believers in the New Testament, remember that our final home and hope is not the earthly Jerusalem in the country of Israel. Our final hope and home is the heavenly Jerusalem, which is written about in Revelation chapter 21, verse 2:

"Then I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven..."

When there will be a new heaven and a new earth, we will live forever in the heavenly Jerusalem, which will come down from heaven to earth, with the Lord God.

### **Morning and the Connection Between Hebrew and Urdu Words**

It is written:

"God will help it early in the morning."

One more very interesting thing: the word for morning in Urdu is "sehar" (a literary word).

And here, the Hebrew word for morning is "sahar" or some pronounce it "shahar." Sahar, Sehar, Shahr — Urdu, Arabic, Hebrew — all are Semitic languages, so their words are very similar.

### **God and the Connection Between Hebrew and Arabic Words**

That is why people say they cannot use the word "Allah" for God — but in our Urdu Bible, the word "Allah" is used twice, this is the first thing.

Second, the Hebrew word "El," "Eloah," or "Elohim" is connected to the Arabic word "Allah."

Also, if you read Arabic Christian Bibles or attend their worship, they call God "Allah" and Jesus Christ "Isa Masih."

### **River of God's Presence, Joy, and Safety**

So today, as New Testament believers, understand it like this: when nations are angry, when kingdoms shake and rise against God's people, God will speak, and by the river of His presence, He will give us joy, safety, and protection.

### **God's Connection with Earthly and Spiritual Jerusalem**

God's connection with earthly Jerusalem in the Old Testament, and with spiritual Jerusalem, which is His church, in the New Testament — you can understand this with an example:

There is a city under siege, surrounded by enemies who have closed all ways for food and water to enter.

The enemies think the people inside will die from thirst soon.

But the city has a secret water supply, a hidden way, that the enemies cannot see.

The enemies outside think the people will surrender or die, but inside the city, water is still coming secretly.

A person can live without food for some time, but cannot live without water.

### **The Church and God's Supply Despite Enemy Siege**

In the same way, when the world and enemies think they have surrounded God's church and His people, they do not see that God has a hidden way to supply help and support, no matter what attacks or sieges happen.

### **Pastor Munawar Khurshid's Prayer and Buying the Plot**

Pastor Munawar Khurshid has said many times before that where we are standing now, in the BGM Church and Bible College, on my left side there is a plot of land which we are trying to buy. The price of this plot is more than ten million rupees.

So far, the gifts and donations collected are thankful to God. But we want to tell you that a much larger amount of money is still needed.

Our God provides through people. So, you who are watching this lecture online, and those sitting here in person, please share this need with your friends, relatives, and family members.

Challenge them to give and also open your own heart to give for God's work.

### **Meaning of "Selah" and Pauses in Psalm 46**

In verse 7 it is written: "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

The same thing is repeated in verse 11: "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

Notice that at the end of verse 3, verse 7, and verse 11, the word "Selah" is written in brackets. "Selah" was a musical term meaning a break or pause. It told the musicians to stop playing for a moment before the next verse started.

That is why verses 1 to 3 form the first part of the Psalm, then there is a pause. Verses 4 to 7 are the second part, then another pause (Selah).

And verses 8 to 11 are the last part of the Psalm.

### **The Lord's Work and Destruction on Earth**

In the last part, it says: "Come, see the works of the Lord, what ruins he has made on the earth." Sometimes people get confused because God is a God of restoration, but here it says He made ruins!

Verse 9 answers this: "He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire."

God made destruction against wars and those who fight wars. He destroyed the weapons and forces that bring war, trouble, destruction, death, and killing in this world.

Our God is the God of peace, the King of safety. It says He stops wars everywhere.

"To make wars cease" means to end wars. He breaks the bow and breaks the spear. In those times, bows and spears were weapons used in war.

The bow was used to shoot arrows, and the spear was thrown.

### **God Loves Peace**

God breaks and destroys weapons because He loves peace more than war.

So today, when there was a war between Pakistan and India, and again there are threats of war, we who follow God should pray for peace and safety between Pakistan and India.

May God keep peace between both countries. May there be no war, because war brings destruction, but our God brings life. War brings ruin, but God brings restoration.

### **Burning Chariots with Fire**

It also says God burns chariots with fire.

Breaking bows, breaking spears, and burning chariots means God defeats and destroys war powers and people who are caught in war madness.

This is the destruction God is doing on earth.

### **Jesus Christ and the Army of Angels**

Remember about Jesus Christ, when people came to catch the Lord Jesus, He said to them: "Are you coming to arrest me with sticks and swords? I was with you every day!"

Then Jesus said, "If I want, I can ask my Father, and He will send me 12 legions of angels."

A legion in the Roman army had 6,000 soldiers. So 12 legions means 72,000 angels.

Jesus said He could ask the Father to send 72,000 angels from heaven to protect Him and fight for Him.

But He did not want to do that because He did not come to bring war, destruction, and death, but peace, safety, and life.

### **Jesus and the Meaning of the Sword**

Some people make a mistake here.

In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus said He did not come to bring peace but a sword.



They think Jesus came to fight with a sword. But the next verse explains that the sword is not for fighting other people in the world.

The sword means suffering and trouble.

Jesus said those who believe in Him will face problems even from their own families.

Fathers will fight their sons, mothers will fight their daughters, and family members will stand against each other because of faith in Jesus.

### **Jesus' Command and Prayer for Peace**

But what Jesus did is important.

When they came to arrest Him, Peter cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest with a sword.

Jesus told Peter to put the sword away, because those who kill with the sword will also be killed by the sword.

Some say Jesus healed the servant's ear so it would not be called "cut ear" for life.

Now, today in the 21st century, when we face wars, let us pray for peace and safety.

Let us pray for the leaders and army chiefs of both countries to choose peace instead of war.

There are more than one billion people in this region. May they be saved from the destruction of war.

### **God's Command: Be Quiet and Know That I Am God**

Then it is written, "Be quiet, and know that I am God." This verse is very important. At that time, the people of Israel were afraid because of war. Especially in those days, and many people even today in our time are afraid because of war. The Lord's answer is, "Be quiet and know that I am God." Here in English it is: *Be Still*. Be quiet. Be calm. Stop. The Hebrew word is "Raphah," which means: loosen your grip, release your hold. It also means: let go, surrender, give up your weapons. It is a military word used for giving up arms. If you read in the Book of Joshua chapter 10, verse 6, and 2 Samuel chapter 4, verse 1, this word is used for surrendering weapons.

God is saying: You have tried a lot by yourself, you have struggled much, you have worked hard and fought. Now stop fighting on your own. Put down your weapons, be quiet, and know that is, come close to me, trust me, I will fight for you and on your behalf. Hallelujah! Do you understand, friend?

If today in your life, those who are watching online or are here, there is some trouble, problem, difficulty, or war, and you are tired of fighting, and you are not getting success or victory, then God says: trust me, stop struggling, surrender, obey me, I will take care of it.

### **The Power and Peace of Jesus Christ**

Look at Mark chapter 4, verse 39. When our Lord Jesus Christ was in the boat and the storm came, He said, "Be still," and it is written that there was great peace, the wind stopped.

Here the Lord is also telling us the same: "Be quiet, stop, be still, let me work."

## **God's Command in the Book of Exodus**

Another example in the Bible is in the Book of Exodus, chapter 14. When the people of Israel left Egypt and became free from slavery—sorry—chapter 14, Pharaoh came behind them with his army. The people thought they were trapped because the Red Sea was in front of them and Pharaoh's army was behind.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses and said—read from Exodus 14:13:

The people of Israel were crying and complaining to Moses, saying he had brought them there to die.

In Exodus 14:13-14 it is written: Then Moses said to the people — by God's word — “Do not be afraid. Stand quietly and watch the Lord's saving work for you today. You will never see these Egyptians again. The Lord will fight for you, and you must be quiet.”

So even today, the Lord through this Psalm is telling us: “Be quiet, trust me, and let me fight for you.”

### **A True Testimony**

Here I share a true story. I heard a testimony from a sister in Lahore. She was pregnant. Many months were left for her baby's birth, and the doctors told her about many medical problems.

She and her husband were very worried, restless, afraid that something might happen to the baby or to her mother.

One day, they decided, “We cannot fight this war every day.” They sat down and prayed together, saying: “God! We give this baby to you, into your hands. This is from you, so you will protect her and fight this war for us.”

Until the time of delivery came, the sister says all her fear disappeared for the remaining months. She had peace in her heart, and not only was she safe, but God gave her a son, and he was safe too.

So this story shows what God is saying.

### **Knowing and Recognizing God**

And it is written, “Know” — the Hebrew word is “Yadah” — which does not mean only to know with the mind or brain, but to know personally and from the heart.

“Know” what? That “I am God.”

“I am God” — like God said in Exodus 6:7 when He freed Israel by His promise from Egypt, He said: “You will know that I am the Lord.”



And it is written: “I will be honored among the nations; I will be honored over all the earth.”

And it is written: “The Lord of armies is with us.”

When we read the New Testament, when Jesus Christ was born, it is written that His name was called “Emmanuel,” which means “God with us.”

When Jesus Christ was about to go to heaven, He promised: “Look, I will be with you always, even to the end of the world.”

So the God who was with Adam in the Garden of Eden, who was with the people of Israel in the desert, who was with the disciples in human form, today through the Holy Spirit He is also with you and me. He is the God of armies, the God of armies.

### **God’s Protection and Loyalty**

So this Psalm teaches us: Our God protects us, provides for us — we talked about the holy city Jerusalem.

Our God gives us victory in wars, and our God is always with us until the end.

### **The Victory of Jesus Christ and Our Hope**

It is written: “He will be honored among the nations.” This means when God returns through Jesus Christ, what will happen?

A new heaven, a new earth, and we will live forever in glory, honor, and closeness to Him.

And remembering the light of Psalm 46 with Jesus’ people:

According to Colossians 2:15, Jesus Christ is our divine warrior.

According to Mark 4:39, Jesus Christ calms the storms for us.

And according to John 7:37-39, Jesus Christ and God’s Holy Spirit are the water of life, the river of life for us.

**God bless you**