

# Psalm 46.<sup>1-11</sup>

## Exalted

### Background

This psalm provides a good starting point for the new series of studies, entitled simply **'Jesus reigns!'** This series is both a natural follow-on to our Easter celebrations, and also a timely study in terms of all that's going on in the world today, particularly in Ukraine.

The resurrection of Jesus is set forth in the New Testament in terms of a victory (for instance, in [1 Cor.15.54-57](#)) – a victory not only over death itself, but more specifically and more significantly over 'him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil' (Heb.2.14). Where previously 'death reigned' ([Rom.5.12-21](#)), now on the back of His victory over death Christ reigns, as Paul argues forcibly in his letter to the church at Corinth ([1 Cor.15.24-26](#)).

The noticeboard outside the church simply declares, therefore, for all the world to see, precisely what the New Testament underlines – 'Jesus reigns!' Indeed, the very notice which Pilate insisted should be put on the cross as Jesus was crucified – and set out on that notice in 3 different languages, for all the world to hear, as it were – made the same point effectively, and declared the same truth: 'Jesus of Nazareth – the King of the Jews'.

But, of course, it doesn't always look like that! To the vast majority of the population, bombarded round the clock as they are with news which tells of war, poverty, famine, oppression, murders, disasters, and a catalogue of different tales of woe – to the vast majority of people it appears only that, if anything, the world is tilting towards being more and more out of control.

If Jesus is King, if He's already obtained the crucial victory over the powers of darkness, then how come things are as they are in the world? And how are we to relate the reign of Jesus as King with the rule which is exercised across the globe by different powers and nations? Why are there 'nations' in the first place? Why are they so often at odds with one another? And why doesn't Jesus step in and stop the cruel injustices, the sorrows and pains that are consequent on a multitude of tragic situations?

That's the sort of background to this new series of studies, which, as I say, I've entitled simply, 'Jesus reigns!' It's a theme which the final book of the Bible illuminates in its graphic and expansive portrayal of how the purpose of God is finding its fulfilment in history. The throne of God is its starting point (Rev.4 & 5), and the sequel is simply a series of 'warning judgments' worked out across the nations down the years. Far from being indicative of the *absence* of Jesus' rule, these major catastrophic events are in truth to be seen as the *application* of Jesus' rule – sombre but gracious warnings of a final judgment to come, given that people might turn from their evil ways and repent while there's still time.

The study of Psalm 46 occupies the first 3 'days' and accordingly I've added some further questions for those 'days'

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## 1) Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April – security

Read [Psalm 46.1-3](#)

*“.. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble ..”* (Ps.46.1)

God Himself provides a safe place when the world seems to be collapsing around you. There will be times of great ‘trouble’ (see [John.16.33](#)) which can sometimes be almost cataclysmic: God affords you stability and security in the midst of it all. Trust Him!

What troubles have you had to face, and how has the Lord helped you through them?

How as a believer are you able to avoid succumbing to the fear which increasingly has characterised our society over the last couple of years?

The language of vv.2-3 is deliberately graphic: what ‘world-shattering’ events readily come to mind?

How might the ‘fear’ which such events occasion in many people provide opportunities for witness?

What would you say to those who, in the face of such events, argue that there surely can’t be a God if such things happen in the world?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, You are my Shepherd and I’m glad that even when I pass through the darkest times You’re always there to keep me safe. Help me keep close to You.*

## 2) Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April – assurance

Read [Psalm 46.4-7](#)

*“.. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall: He lifts His voice, the earth melts ..”* (Ps.46.6)

The world may be in ‘uproar’, with the political landscape rapidly changing around you – but the Scriptures assure you of two important truths which the news headlines miss: the security there is in God’s presence, and the power there is in His Word.

In what ways is the ministry of the Holy Spirit within you similar to the ‘river’ spoken of in the psalm (see [John.7.38](#))?

How will you answer a critic who points out that Jerusalem, of course, *did* fall (and more than once)? How are you to understand the assertion of v.5 that because ‘God is within her, she will not fall’?

What’s meant by the assertion that when the Lord lifts His voice, ‘the earth melts’?

What encouragement are we meant to take from the way in which God is described in (v.7 – and in v.11) as ‘the LORD Almighty’ and ‘the God of Jacob’?

How do we best ensure for each person that being part of ‘the fellowship of the Holy Spirit’ is experienced by them in terms of their having a ‘strong fortress’?

*Prayer: Thank You, Lord, that You are so able to keep me from stumbling and so ready to pick me up when I do fall. Please minister such grace to all who may have fallen.*

### 3) Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April – sovereign

Read [Psalm 46.8-11](#)

*“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations’ ..” (Ps.46.10)*

Empires and their leaders may well rise and strut their stuff across the page of history: but the Lord alone is sovereign – and empires finally fall, left desolate by the Lord of history. Take time to ponder history and know this: every knee will bow before Jesus!

What hints are there in these verses as to why the sovereign God allows wars to be waged?

How will you answer someone who challenges the assertion of v.9 and points to the continued warring of the nations? What instances are there of the LORD ‘making wars cease to the ends of the earth’?

What time can you take today simply to be still and to feed yourself again with the knowledge that the Lord is God?

In what ways do you see the LORD ‘exalting Himself’ among the nations today?

*Prayer: Have mercy, O Lord, upon this broken, hurting world. Grant peace in place of conflict, reconciliation instead of deepening animosity. Help me to be a peace-maker.*

### 4) Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April – exalted

Read [Psalm 47.1-4](#)

*“How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth ..” (Ps.47.2)*

All authority has been given to our risen Lord Jesus: He reigns as the great King over all creation. The nations of the world, however mighty they may seem, and however dismissive they may be of Him, are no match for Him and for His people.

What was true at certain times in Israel’s history has become true of the church: in what sense are the nations subdued ‘under us’ (v.3)?

In the Lord’s dealings with you, what ‘providences’ have highlighted His love for you?

*Prayer: You are, indeed, truly awesome, Lord, in every way! Help me to rest in the knowledge that You’re well able to ‘subdue’ whatever I may face today.*

## 5) Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April – sovereign

Read [Psalm 47.5-9](#)

*“.. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne ..” (Ps.47.8)*

God reigns over all the nations which He created – Russia, Ukraine, them all. His sovereign purposes are always altogether good – for you as for His world – and the more you grasp that basic truth, the greater the joy with which you’ll praise Him.

If God is indeed King of all the earth, why does He allow so much suffering?

In what ways will you be able greatly to exalt God today?

**Prayer:** *Thank You, Lord, that You will always have the final word. Help me to trust You through those darker times when I can’t see any purpose to what’s going on.*

## 6) Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April – fortress

Read [Psalm 48.1-8](#)

*“God is in her citadels; He has shown Himself to be her fortress ..” (Ps.48.3)*

Enveloped in the arms of the Lord you are totally safe: He is your fortress. Nothing can harm you, for He has set His love upon you and you are His (see [Isaiah 43.1-7](#)); and the Lord will destroy with consummate ease all that threatens His people.

How has the Lord ‘shown Himself to be (your) fortress’??

What have been striking examples of your seeing in your own life what you have heard in the Scriptures the Lord doing in the experience of others?

**Prayer:** *I will sing with joy now, my God and King, knowing that You are for us, and that Your Father’s love for me is a strong and mighty fortress ([City Alight](#)).*

## 7) Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May – Jesus

Read [Psalm 48.9-14](#)

*“.. this is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even to the end ..” (Ps.48.14)*

God’s people (as His ‘city’) bear the character of God Himself. Through the work of the Spirit, His mercy and His justice are everywhere to be seen. Rejoice in all that Jesus is and be glad that He takes you by the hand to bring you safely to His heavenly kingdom.

If people ‘walked round’ your fellowship what would they see which pointed them to the unfailing love and unwavering righteousness of God?

To whom in the ‘next generation’ are you able to declare God’s praises today?

**Prayer:** *In all my daily living, as I walk humbly with Yourself, my Lord, show me what it means to act justly and to love mercy: may my whole life proclaim Your worthiness.*