

#39 “Be Still and Know He Is God”

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Psalm 46:10 is a very well-known and comforting (and/or convicting) verse which speaks volumes to those of us who are prone to anxiety, worry, fear, and doubt. It says, "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The King James Version has the more often quoted phrase which reads, "Be still, and know that I am God." The Hebrew word from which we get the phrase "be still," *raphah*[1], could mean any of the following: to let drop, to forsake, to abandon, to relax, to let alone, and to be quiet. This quietness of soul was God's desire for His people as they recognized, perceived, confessed, and acknowledged that He indeed was God and in control of all things. Such is the implication of the Hebrew word *yada*[2], translated "know."

The context of this passage is important, for it speaks of the protection and care that God had for His people Israel. God's covenant to them was that Canaan would remain theirs and that blessing would be given to them if they would honor God and obey His commands, which they were doing at this time during David's kingship (Deuteronomy 12:10, 2 Samuel 7:11). The nation had no need to fear despite the uproars and threats from other nations (46:6), for God was with them, giving them steady victory over enemy nations (46:7). When rumors of wars arose or there was a time to go into battle, God would crush the enemy before them, creating peace (c.f. Psalm 91). The temptation for them, however, was to shrink in fear and worry when the indications of trouble and strife began to brew. The culminating truth of this passage is that, despite external troubles, God's people are exhorted to rest in His very present help, refuge, and strength (46:1). Israel's hope was that God was with them, watching out for them, protecting them, and fighting for them. Thus, they could let their fears abate and relax in the presence and protection of God Almighty.

When difficulties come, which they will (John 16:33), we are not to let trouble consume us or destroy our faith. God is with us even in the darkest of valleys (Psalm 23:4). When we find ourselves in a pit of our own making or because of the wrongs of others toward us, God is there, and He is fully able to lift us up out of the depths (Psalm 40:2). There is no place we can go and no trouble which can come upon us which will remove God's presence from us. He will never leave us or forsake us, period (Hebrews 13:5). Even in our darkest hour or most difficult hour, God is there. Of course, if we have sinned, repentance is the first step in reaching out to God's hand for help. But even then, we are still in His hands (John 3:35, 10:28-29). He is our refuge and strength; therefore we need not fear (Matthew 10:31) or worry (Matthew 6:34).

Here is something to keep in mind as we seek God's rest. God had promised to give Israel external protection and blessing, but we are not Israel under King David. God does look out for us, but He also allows trials to come. Being fully aware of the weight of

eternal glory (2 Corinthians 4:7), what God is chiefly concerned about is the state of our hearts, where His present day kingdom exists (Matthew 13:19). It is these He will protect and defend, for He has promised that the powers of hell cannot prevail against the grasp of Christ on our souls and His presence in our hearts (Matthew 16:18, Romans 8:31). Thus, the application of Psalm 46:10 for us is that we can have rest and be free of fear and anxiety even when trouble does come. God's guarantee to us is that we will always be children of the kingdom and that sin, Satan, and death have no power over us. We always have the right to His peace and rest.

If we find that we are lacking this peace and quiet in our hearts, there is a remedy. Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Just as powerfully and wonderfully as the kingdom of Israel was guarded by God under King David, so too will God guard our hearts and minds with His peace if we if we share our concerns and petitions with Him, if we truly surrender them and ourselves to His care (1 Peter 5:7), and if we give Him thanks. It is our choice to by faith exchange our anxiety for the peace that surpasses understanding.

Jesus spoke to the wind and waves and commanded them to "Hush, be still" (Mark 4:39). May He do the same in our hearts as we trust Him even amidst the winds and waves of life.

1 Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius. "Hebrew Lexicon entry for Raphah". "The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon".
<<http://www.biblestudytools.net/Lexicons/Hebrew/heb.cgi?number=7503&version=kjv>>.

2 Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius. "Hebrew Lexicon entry for Yada`". "The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon".
<<http://www.biblestudytools.net/Lexicons/Hebrew/heb.cgi?number=3045&version=kjv>>.