

Rich Psalm with history for most of us, whether in singing or in memorization.

Famously verses 1-2 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear

And Verse 10 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Who among us hasn't been anxious or worried or afraid or encouraged by those words! Who has felt more like screaming out our alarm, or suddenly waking in worry and fear at night, the only thing keeping us “still” is concern for waking others in our family?

Some phrases in the Psalm influence the wording for A Mighty Fortress is Our God, by Martin Luther

Usually, our application and interest in this Psalm has been shaped by our lived experience. Living in Taiwan, its culture, climate and political situation, shapes our understanding and curiosity about phrases in this Psalm that might not immediately click with landlocked farming and buggy culture in Lancaster Co., where here you only have distant news of national troubles, political struggles, wars, rumors of wars, soldiers, and veterans of wars. However, Taiwan fits a number of the elements of this Psalm about deeper meanings or neglect phrases that could become more prominent with better understanding. We wish the Lord would make some nearby kingdoms totter and others succeed. Taiwan's daily news is about nations raging, threats of kingdoms conquering or kingdoms tottering, so the promise of wars ceasing is really a huge comfort! Islands like Taiwan give us graphic pictures of other imagery used in Psalm 46. We have lots of annual exposure to roaring and foaming seas with typhoons whipping up massive swells and tsunamis swallowing the coastlines. We have lots of gentle rivers running near Taipei national monuments and have a decent comparison with oceans around Taiwan surging, roaring and foaming. Mountains shaking makes lots of sense to us in Taiwan since it's on the Pacific ring of fire with about 50 earthquakes daily. However, I've not witnessed any eastern coastline “mountains” falling into the Pacific, (the tectonic plate shifts make the mountains higher). We regularly have sizable boulders breaking off an falling into the coastal highway.

But even these facile and circumstantial similarities between Taiwan and Psalm 46 are not enough. We need a look at what original historical contexts are blended in Psalm 46 to make better comparisons today. However, I've come to see that these images of mountains moving into the seas and the earth melting are not meant to be taken literally. Peter Craigie's Psalm commentary pointed me to new historical contexts for understanding this Psalm. His insights will provide a launching point for deeper exploration. I invite you to reexamine it today with me.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ON PSALM 46 CONTEXTS

Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 343 has the best insights on the historical narrative background to the phrases and words of this Psalm. “The Hebrew antecedent to the psalm is probably to be found in the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15:1-18), for many of that song's themes are developed in the present psalm: (1) the Lord's strength and protection (Exod. 15:2; Ps 46:2, 8, 12. . .) (2) the Lord's subjugation of the chaotic

waters (Exod. 15:4-5, 8, 10; Ps 46:3-4 . . . ; (3) the Lord's *dwelling*, secured by his victory (Exod. 15:17; Ps 46:5)." Here Craigie notes significant intertextuality. We will explore more connections below with specific vocabulary and imagery drawn from the larger context of the Red Sea crossing and the song of Exodus 14-15.

Starting with Craigie's insights on historical context will alert us to another key application of this Psalm, which is totally focused on God and what he does (God is, He is, he makes, he is with us). That seems a bit spiritual and abstract for us now, until we see that God did these actions through mediate representatives who acted as help in trouble, stable and unmoved witnesses who heard God utter his voice and saw kingdoms totter and melt through their service. They were present to help and serve in fortress-like ways, burning chariots and shields.

Let's use the Symphonic Pedagogical structure of the Westminster Larger Catechism to explore the meaning of Psalm 46

I. Who is God and what has he done, what will he do?

- A. Psalm 46 has significant allusions to the Lord's deliverance from Egypt,
 1. the desolations of the Ten Plagues, breaking their bows and shattering their spears in the Red Sea *when morning dawned, making wars cease* (vss. 5, 8-9; Exod. 14:24-28; Colossians 2:15).
 2. He '*shattered the enemy*' (vs. 9, Exod. 15:6) 'in the heart of the sea' vs. 2, guiding your people by your strength to your holy abode (Exod. 15:17; Ps. 46:4).
- B. The Psalm blends the Red Sea crossing as the point of entry into God's "habitation" but linked with later Davidic experience of God dwelling in his unshakable city vss. 4-5 facing other raging nations that totter vs. 6. The God of Jacob is a refuge and strength to help his people in trouble vs. 1, to "help her when morning dawns" (crossing the Red Sea at night vs. 5, Exod. 14:24-27, collapsing the Red Sea in the morning, because "the Lord of hosts [armies] is with us" meaning, the Lord with his legions of angels serve as a walled fortress to protect his people vss.7, 11; see 1 Kings 22:19).
- C. God works miraculous deliverance from enemies, *by mediate representation* of the angel of his presence (preincarnate Christ 他面前的使者), and the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:9-14; Exod. 23:20-21; 33:14; Gen. 48:16).
- D. Why mention "the God of Jacob"? This phrase starts to be used in Exodus with Moses (Exod. 3:6, 15-16; 4:15; 19:3), who are called "the house of Jacob" at Sinai (Exod. 19:3).
- E. God judges the rebellious nations with loss of prestige and military power. "Melted" might be translated metaphorically as fearing, or fainting, while the "mountains be moved into the sea" could be understood as Egypt's humbling, the self-exalted being brought low (see **Isa. 2:14**, full context **Isa. 2:11-17 READ** where mountains represent the pride of man or Isa. 41:15 Israel shall "thresh the mountains" in judgment, meaning wicked nations; Ezek. 38:20 "the mountains shall be thrown down" see Hab. 3:6, 10) (or Israel, "the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountain" (Mic. 4:1; see Mic. 6:1-2 same metaphor, "hear you mountains"); Ezek. 36:1; 35:12 "I have heard all the revilings that you uttered against *the mountains of Israel*" Isa. 5:25 the fear of man for his life is like the 'mountains quaking, hills melting in fear' (see Isa. 64:1, 3; Nah. 1:5). Or Isa. 42:15 "I will lay waste mountains and hills" meaning Israel, Isa.

42:24-25; Ezek. 6:3 “you mountains of Israel” the Lord will judge; see Matt. 21:21 impending judgment on national Israel, “be taken up and thrown into the sea, it will happen” in this specific case in 70 AD) and two different mountains that entered the heart of the sea (only one mountain came out of the sea to be established in Zion). ‘How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who bring good news’ (basically meaning messengers among the nations Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15). “earth” could be understood as the nations, thus ‘the nations trembled with fear’ vs. 6 (see Exod. 15:15 “all the inhabitants of Canaan have *melted* away”). The Lord desolates their military equipment and man-power. He ends their warring against his kingdom vs. 8-9 and he will be exalted over them and bring praise to his own name from all nations vs.10.. **There might be hints of the Noahic flood waters and the mountain of Noah’s family being moved through the heart of the flood waters that destroyed the raging nations, melting & desolating the earth, and silencing the sinfulness of mankind in judgment.**

II. What is man’s duty? WLC uses a Ten Commandments structure to define man’s duty (creating pro-virtue words to describe these duties, since we tend to link the commandments with prohibitions, due to the Mosaic structure of 8 “do nots” and only 2 “positive virtues to do: 4th C remember the Sabbath day; 5th C honor father and mother)

- A. 3rd C (pro-blessing: not take Lord name in vain, duty to praise his holy NAME) Let everyone, those who trust him and those who fight against him, let all give him all the praise for his saving-judging power; His name will be exalted among all nations vs.10
- B. 5th C (pro-harmony: honor father and mother, duty to fulfil roles of authority an submission) God works miraculous deliverance from enemies, *by mediate representation* of Moses and the people, pointing to the kingship of David and Christ.
 1. **Moses:** “You [the Lord] stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them,” (Exod. 15:12). Yet this was by the mediation of the Lord’s anointed prophet Moses, who, at the Lord’s command, stretched out his staff, opening the Red Sea with the help of the angel of his presence (Isa. 63:9-14 KJV “[where is the angel of his presence] that led *them* by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?”) ordering the created waters to do his saving and judging work. Then Moses, at God’s direction, stretched out his hand and closed up the waters upon their enemies (Exod. 15:16, 26-27).
 2. **All Israel:** It is possible that Israel burned the *chariot*-refuse that washed up on the sea shore, likely made of light, strong woods (bamboo, rattan) and leather for the platform and holding it together, or it could be translated as burning the *shields* that washed up on the shore (“he burns the chariots with fire (把戰車焚燒在火中 CUV) [*or the shields 盾牌 CNET*]” vs. 9; see prophecy of post-exilic restoration in Ezekiel 39:9, burning the wooden weapons of their enemies for seven years). If the allusion to the Lord “burning the shields with fire” also hearkens back to the desolation of the Egyptian army washing up on the shore and being burned by the people, these would also be his mediate representatives (Exod. 14:30 if Egyptian soldiers’ bodies washed up, so would their shields). Also Exodus 15:7 uses the metaphor of the Lord’s anger like a fire consuming chaff.
 3. **David’s eternal kingship** dominion was to reign from sea to sea (Ps. 72:8; see Exod. 23:31

Israel's land stretched from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines).

C. God's people

1. (**pro-Lord**, no other gods before me, I must be first in everything, your thoughts and your discernment of who is God and what I say as truth) 1st C Do not fear the circumstances, when Israel crossed the Red Sea like “mountains . . . moved into the heart of the sea” or “mountains tremble at its swelling” (**fear of the Red Sea itself, not stopped by fear from passing through**). Also the help God gives in trouble, threat of annihilation, no matter what kinds of massive threats they pose (similar to tsunamis), no matter what their war machine of bows, spears and chariots looks like vss. 2, 9; God's people should also stop their fearful cries of shock, and instead “**BE STILL**”, fearing God alone, and know that he is God (cf. Exod. 14:13-14, 31). In the Red Sea crossing, the people feared the Egyptian chariots and soldiers when they drew near the Red Sea (Exod. 14:10). Moses commanded them, “Fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord . . . the Lord will fight for you, and **you have only to be silent**” . . . and the Lord said, . . . “I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts . . . and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord . . .” (Exod. 14:13-18).
2. (**Pro-Lord, Pro-covenantal**, 1st C trust; 2nd Cs implied in the method, place of worship: Trust the God of their “strength” who guides to his holy dwelling (cf. Exod. 15:2, 13). Notice Exodus 23:31 where the crossing of the Red Sea marked the southern boundary of their promised land, thus their literal entrance into God's holy habitation.
3. (**pro-blessing**) 3rd C, proper use of his name; 2nd C praise for all he provides for worship: Be glad for the river running through the city of God, his immovable/unshakable kingdom/city, “she shall not be moved” 5, his holy dwelling, with God in her midst vss. 4-5
4. (**pro-theosynchrony**) 4th C There are numerous rest-related imageries in Psalm 46 using words like “wars cease” (vs.9) paired with “be still, and know that I am God” (vs.10), and “morning dawns” (vs.5; cf. Gen. 1:31 ‘evening and morning, the sixth day’, followed by 2:2 “and on the seventh day . . .”). Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 345, draws attention to the Exodus version of the 4th C in its rationale of the sabbath rest is linked to bringing order to the chaos of the waters in Genesis during God's six days of labor (Exod. 20:11; Gen. 1:1-2). The Deuteronomic version of the 4th C links the rationale for Sabbath rest to the Lord's kingdom deliverance out of the chaos of Egypt's historical bondage through crossing the Red Sea waters (Deut. 5:15; Exod. 15:1-18). I would suggest that Craigie notices a correct parallel, but his explanation of its meaning could be augmented with a better rationale than ‘faith in creation’ which he seems to interpret as God working a reordering to creation's watery chaos. **Psalm 46+4th C connection is better explained as meaning God delivered them from the toilsome-futility of slave-labor+war into Jacob's/Israel's 4th C duty of being still and knowing that he is God (vs.10), making wars and slavery cease (vs.9), exalting him among the nations (vs.10), (vss. 1, 11), freedom from fear (vs. 2), and finding rest, refuge, protection, and joy eventually in Jerusalem's promised-city with provision of a river (vss. 1, 4, 11) as sabbath morning dawns for her blessed rest (vs. 5).** It is possible that the destruction of Egypt's army in the Red Sea happened on a Sabbath morning, marking it as a day of rest and

deliverance from toils of slavery and war.

D. Warring nations

1. (pro-Lord: 1st C submission to the truth LORD) They should be still and watch what he does to help his people in trouble and what he does to judge them as his enemies in their warring pride against his kingdom (cf. Exod. 15:16). These nations must stop their clamor and rebellious noise, be still and know that he is God (vs. 10). In the Red Sea crossing, these foreign nations are still/quiet until God's people pass by and enter their holy dwelling place, God's mountain-sanctuary where He will reign forever and ever (Exod. 15:6, 8, 13-18).
2. Nations are angry, their kingdoms melted away. Mountains/earth melting appears to be a metaphor for nations like Egypt and those surrounding melting in fear and cries of shock, their kingdoms shaking and disappearing (Exod. 15:15)

With so many ancient military conquest and situation specific metaphors in Psalm 46 related to the Red Sea crossing, this event becomes a typological paradigm for future stability and protection of God's people and the promised conquest of their enemies. *(There may also be hints of the Noahic flood imagery as well, uttering his voice, the earth literally melting with tectonic plate shifts)*. The paradigm is for faith in God's incarnate-indwelling, protecting help in trouble, with his people as a "mountain" moving *through* (rather than being destroyed in it) the heart of the Red Sea deliverance into a place of quiet rest and walled-fortress refuge, an unshakable kingdom. They must be fearless in the face of even apparent impending slaughter by enemies, who appear to be as massive and immovable as mountains, or as threatening as the tsunamis of the ocean, for the Lord speaks and their military powers and weapons become desolate and shattered. Also, the Lord provides mediate representatives, especially judges and kings, but also prophets and priests, that believe these promises and lead the people to re-experience God's the protection and defense through their heroic acts of obedience.

Ultimately these point us to the fulfillments by our mediate representative Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though his ascension to the right hand of power and the sending of the Spirit, he rules until every enemy is put under his feet through his earthly mediate representative visible church. Christ is already making wars to cease, and not yet brought all wars to cease. God is with us in Christ and present help in trouble in Christ, Christ moves mountains into and through the heart of the seas. God is our city and our holy habitation in Christ. The nations rage against the Lord and his Christ, but God ordained Christ to utter his voice and the nations will tremble in fear at the unstoppable, unshakeable, immovable kingdom of Christ. Christ, as prince of peace, makes wars and make wars to cease. BE still and know the Triune God who is and will be exalted among the nations.

But we do not yet see this Psalm completely fulfilled. We are in an intermediate time of **War and Peace**

WHAT KINDS of WARS? The great **battle is between sin and righteousness**, those representatives who sin and those who seek first his kingdom and righteousness; the starting point of the wars of the post-fall age is the serpent and his offspring against the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). The curse brought on the world after the fall brings these punishments of sin against four types of relationships.

It is tempting to consider that this promises us individual physical protection in all circumstances. Or to misunderstand that we and all our kin and our president and our country are part of these ones God's promises to protect. War is one of the curses or punishments of sin in this world (WLC 28, inward 1-3rd, 10th terrors of conscience, vile affections/outward on employments, relations, estates, names) that will always be with us until the new earth is ushered in, will be the experience of war and rumors of war (戰爭的謠言), giving men up to their greedy lusts (Rom. 1:18-32). Yet God's people, and some common grace bring blessing of righteousness to this world and cause unjust 'wars to cease' or prosecute a "just war" to protect human life (inward 1-3rd, 10th peace and joy of conscience, holy affections/outward on employments, relations, estates, names).

He makes what kinds of "WARS" to cease? Reversing the curses of war, their inward and outward sorrows. WARS are a result of the punishments of sin in this world.

Question 28: What are the punishments of sin in this world?

Answer: The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments; together with death itself.

28 問：罪在現今生所帶來來的懲罰是什麼？

答：罪在現今生所帶來來的懲罰有：

(1) 內在的懲罰：如悟性的混昧 (弗 4:18) ， 被棄的感 (羅 1:28) ， 強烈的妄想 (帖後 2:11) ， 心靈的剛硬 (羅 2:5) ， 良心的懼怕 (賽 33:14 ； 創 4:13 ； 太 27:4) ， 和情感的卑劣 (羅 1:26) 。

(2) 外在的懲罰：如上帝因我們的罪緣故咒詛世界 (創 3:17) ， 有各樣的災難臨到我們的身體、名譽、財產、關係和職業 (申 28:15 - 18) ， 還有死亡 (羅 6:21, 23) 。

How will Wars CEASE?

Q2: What are the blessings of *lex Christi* obedience in this life?

A2: In this world still under the creational-providential post-fall curses, all blessings related to restoration of Christ's *lex Christi* rule in us and in the entire creation are sourced from the Father and come to us through mediate representatives. Exact representatives are Christ, the Spirit and God's Word, approximate representatives are creation order, angels, man, creatures. These blessings are inward, in the soul, such as mutually synergistic peace of conscience toward God and his law in union with Christ, adoption to sonship, spiritual discernment, renewed holy affections and hope of glory (1st-3rd Cs).¹ These

¹ WLC 83 explanation of 'communion with Christ in glory in this life' has some parallels with the inward blessings noted above: "The members of the invisible church . . . enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy [Spirit], and hope of glory . . ."

blessings are outward, in the multi-sensory body,² experiencing material-relational blessings in time-space synchronies (4th C), physical bodies (6th C), material resources on a portion of this earth (8th C), relationships (5th authority-submission; 7th C marriage, family) and reputations (9th C). We respond to these inward and outward glory-blessings revealed *to* us, *on* us, and *in* us with a legitimate derivative happiness that must be disciplined with thankful contentment (10th C). These all combine to nurture our chief and highest purposes to glorify and enjoy God (1st-3rd Cs; WLC 1). Further, these blessings must be reflected *by* us to others, while awaiting their eternal perfection in the new heavens and new earth and the removal of the punishments of sin in this world.

WHERE ARE THE WARS? HOW DOES GOD MAKE THESE WARS CEASE? WAR & PEACE

1. Self: Sin nature against new creation nature 2. Assembly 3. Creation 4. Diaspora Non-Christians against Christians

WAR & PEACE with SELF (inward + outward): (inward, *self-discipline against our own sinful nature*).

IS the LORD truly a wise and good KING (1st C war)

To be satisfied, do I really need MORE things, to accomplish more jobs, achieve more successes? (10th C warfare against envy, discontentment, demanding my plan must be achieved, vs. kingdom motivation to faithfully serve Christ and all my duties and responsibilities, very visible and less visible, in all circumstances)

The peace he brings to our conscience in being reconciled to God and man, adopted as his beloved child. The more you sow to the Spirit in doing any duty of the moral law, the more you set your mind on the desires of the Spirit to bring *lex Christi* blessing into your life. Your own warfare against sinful desires is stilled. The more you enjoy the blessings of *lex Christi* obedience in relation to God and experiencing the flourishing that moral obedience brings (harmonious relationships, humble, peacemaking, sexual purity, stewardship, honoring reputations, contentment and thankfulness), the more you are attracted to their beauty and pleasure, and source all things back to the enjoyment of God himself.

ASSEMBLY: where two or more gathered in his name, there he is in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20 因_為 為_無 論_在 那_裡 有_兩 三_個 人_奉 我_的 名_聚 會_就 有_我 在_他 們_中 間_） as a fortress, as a help in time of need) The second application of this warfare-protection Psalm and others like it, is with the assembly of God’s people, the visible church as his (inward + outward) warfare representative (Eph. 6:12). Marriages, families, parents to children, children to parents, brothers and sisters visibly identified with Christ. To her he gives gifts in the likeness of his offices as king, priest and

² In addition to the normally accepted five senses of sight, taste, touch, hearing and smell, we also have various other “__ceptions” *Equilibrioception* – a sense of balance. *Proprioception* – knowing which parts of your body are where without looking; *Kinaesthesia* – sense of movement; *Thermoception* – we know whether our environment is too cold or too hot; *Nociception* – the ability to feel pain; *Chronoception* – how we sense the passing of time, *Magnetoreception* – the ability to detect magnetic fields; and additional sensations of itch, muscle tension, pressure, stretch (bladder, stomach, lungs, intestines), chemoreceptors (poisons, drugs, hormones), thirst and hunger, <https://www.hellahealth.com/blog/wellness/humans-five-senses/> accessed December 5, 2022.

prophet to enable his kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. **He keeps us in the love of Christ and *lex Christi* conformity** to his son by the intercession of the Spirit throughout all the assaults of the fallen world under God's curse, the flesh and the devil and his earthly representatives (Rom. 8:18-39). He uses the **means of grace and the supportive blessings of the visible church** to support us to reach the new Jerusalem. Witness for God and exemplify trust in his daily providence (1st C) point to Christ as the new covenant mediator (2nd C), live with integrity for the honor of God's name (3rd C), labor 6 days, rest 1 day and join with the saints in worship and works of mercy (4th C), honor your authorities and be an honorable authority to those who submit to you (5th C), be peacemakers with one another (6th C). honor marriage (7th C), model and teach stewardship (8th C), speak truthfully and graciously about others (9th C) and cultivate a culture of thankfulness and contentment in all circumstances.

CREATION: Creation and its creatures, man's creation work, the human body all under the curse against mankind, thorns, creatures fear man, war between man and creatures; so the need to bring medical peace against viruses, to tame the wild creatures (馴服野生動物), make to cease the war against the body, sickness and death (mediate representatives (parents, spouse to each other to children; some of you specialize in causing in the medical profession

DIASPORA:

Non-Christians will always create “wars” against the church, sometime involving nations against nations, sometimes a nation's government or police will persecute Christians in its own country. Sometimes less aggressive, but strong nations, will engage in just war to prevent aggression of a cruel nation, or will support a weaker nation to wage a just war against an unprovoked attacking nation (Ukraine attacked by Russia, but supported by many powerful NATO (北約) nations 烏克蘭被俄羅斯襲擊, 但得到許多強國的支持). World War II Germany and Japan attacked other weaker nations until the Allied forces stopped them 第二次世界大戰, 德國和日本攻擊其他較弱的國家, 直到盟軍阻止了他們. Sometimes Christians will be peacemakers among the nations to prevent these types of wars before they start, or help to negotiate a peace treaty 談判和平條約.

There are general equity principles in the diaspora that are not simply spiritual. We are embodied souls living in time-space with constant socio-political, military threats. God is concerned with his church and those suffering for his name's sake. He does use his mediate representatives to “make wars to cease.” Those persecuted by powers, whether by an outside army or their own government military or police, must **entrust themselves to God's just judgment** while continuing to do the duties of the moral law (1 Pet. 2:23; 4:19). Some he calls to be **soldiers of the national military to fight in a just war** against international wicked attackers. “for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer,” 因為他^是神^的用^人, 是^與你^有益^的。你^若作^惡, 卻^當懼^怕; 因為他^不是^空空^的佩^劍, 他^是神^的用^人, 是^伸冤^的, 刑^罰那^作惡^的。(Rom. 13:4). He also entrusts his people to serve as mediate representatives of his refuge-fortress metaphors for those in trouble, such as caring for orphans and widows in their distress (Jas. 1:27).

There is great mystery in God's judging-saving purposes in the international-political realm. "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever." 當那列王在位的時候，天上的神必另立一國，永不敗壞，也不歸別國的人，卻要打碎滅絕那一切國，這國必存到永遠。(Dan. 2:44). He appointed governments to use their power of the sword to reward the good and punish the evil (Rom. 13:1-4). If they do not do this, God will judge them, though generally not immediately. He can and does remove wicked kingdoms that enslave and persecute his church, but that national trajectory is often as long and slow as Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery (430 years from their move to Egypt until their deliverance to serve the Lord). He may do this removal of the wicked on micro-individual (removing a bad leader) or macro-national or international scale (overthrowing a civil uprising, or permitting a coup, or a nation's military in an international war). He may do this removal directly or by the mediate representation his people with military/police strength (Rom. 13:1-7), or using self-defense (6th C duty). There is some credibility granted to powerful nations that use their power to protect the smaller, weaker and non-aggressive peoples from military aggression by larger or more powerful armies.

While the political body of the United Nations (聯合國) today is certainly not an example of God's people that God promises to protect, as in Psalm 46, they do use their power to support weaker nations being attacked, most recently supporting Ukraine against unprovoked Russian aggression.

There are Christians on both sides of these national or international wars, and thus it is unwise to believe that God holds one side as his people while planning to defeat the other side. We do not know what will come of the Taiwan-China situation. Neither nation's leaders can claim that they are morally righteous or their own country is more morally righteousness. Both democracy (rule by the immoral, false religion majority) and communism (rule by dictators) have been used for evil. God has his people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and idolaters on both sides of the Strait. We pray that the rumors of war will cease, but if not, that we and all the Chinese will know our God who is our spiritual refuge and fortress against the sins of the flesh, the world and the devil, that our salvation would be secure. But who knows if the Christians may have a mediate representative role to play in causing these rumors of war between Taiwan and China to cease? The true war is between the invisible church and the forces of evil in the heavenly realms as they express that warfare through the earthly representatives. We pray his kingdom will come, while lending our best support to those who (based on our best understanding) seem to be the least evil governments. But God may have a purpose to turn both Taiwan and China to himself as refuge and fortress, while showing men that the best use of missiles and aircraft carriers would be those governments that faithfully represent some aspects of his moral law in civil society and protect others who do the same.

He will bring an end to all wars in the final judgment, and heal the war-torn sorrows of the nations with the leaves from the trees (樹上的葉子乃為醫治萬民) growing on the banks of the river flowing from his throne (Rev. 22:2).